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CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

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OF THE  
SERBIAN SAINTS



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TRANSLATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

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SERIES VII

LIVES OF THE  
SERBIAN SAINTS







ST. SAVA

*Frontispiece*



TRANSLATIONS OF CHRISTIAN  
LITERATURE. SERIES VII

LIVES OF THE  
SERBIAN SAINTS

THE  
LIVES OF THE  
SERBIAN SAINTS

*By* VOYESLAV YANICH D.D.  
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## INTRODUCTION

THIS collection of lives is taken from what we should call the martyrology of the Church in Serbia. There were, at one time, a number of these martyrologies in use in Europe containing different lists of saints, together with their lives. In the West these tended to give place to a calendar and lives of a more or less official character ; but in the East the monasteries in particular seem to have kept their own calendars and their own special traditions about their saints and special offices in their memory. This was the case in Serbia, where many monasteries preserved their own separate collection until the middle of the last century. In all these old office books certain great national saints would be sure of a place. No Serbian martyrology would be complete without a life of St. Sava, for instance. But the stories of their lives, affected by local tradition or by some contact of the saints with the monastery in his lifetime, would often show considerable variety. Other saints would be included only in the commemoration of churches of a particular district because their fame had never sufficiently penetrated beyond it. Two classes of difference thus arose in these various collections. There was the variety in the list of saints included ; and there was sometimes considerable variety in the stories of their lives.

In the middle of the last century, however, there was issued one martyrology for the use of the Church



throughout Serbia. A certain list of national saints thus obtained recognition, and the stories of their lives received a fixed form. It is a translation of the lives included in this book which is here presented.

The result of this treatment of the old office books may be compared with the outcome of the work of the various writers who edited the original documents of the Hexateuch. Sometimes a selection has been made from a choice of stories. Sometimes one detects that the paste and scissors have been at work. Sometimes part of a story seems to have been rewritten because edification is more important than a close adherence to tradition. And just as the student of the Hexateuch would like to be able to see the original documents, untouched by the hand of the redactor, so it is probable that the reader of these lives will wish at times that he could compare them with an earlier version, or could read the other stories from which this particular one was selected. The work of harmonizing the different accounts has not been perfectly done in every case, and it is possible to observe in the narratives the remains of a double tradition. In the case of several of the lives, those of the less national saints, it is probable that not more than one history of them has survived and that this has been incorporated almost, if not wholly, as it stood.

Such is, in outline, the history of this collection. What is its importance? Any list of national saints, with some account of their lives, however jejune, has importance for the historian. If we know the sort of men and women whom a nation delights to honour in this way, we know something of that people. And that particular "something" is very difficult to discover in any other way. At first glance, a nation's saints will often appear to have been selected in a haphazard way.

The list will be found to contain names which we feel have no place in such exalted company. There is a bewildering variety of type. Yet these men and women have shown themselves possessed of spiritual qualities to which their countrymen have specially aspired. To people of another century and another civilization the general impression created by the life of some national saint may be fantastic or crude, or commonplace or even immoral. The nation itself, however, has seen in him only those qualities which it most urgently desires for itself. And to know a nation's ideals is to know something of the roots of its vitality. It is not easy to discover the ideals of one's own day with precision; the task of the historian is far more difficult. Will he not be wise to pay more attention than he has done in the past to what is rather contemptuously known as hagiography?

In the collection before us we find a large proportion of kings and great churchmen. They are the men who made of the Serbians an independent people and built up the short-lived Serbian Empire. Of some of them that is about all that can be said. But to the Serbian whose freedom was his life—whose liberty was threatened from the north or the south for decade after decade—that was enough. And later generations, living under the Turk, looked with love and reverence on the men who had once made their people free; and when he could, he saw to it that their relics lay in a country which was at least free from the infidel. This type is represented in almost all national calendars. Our Edward the Confessor has much in common with these church-building kings of the early Serbian state. St. Dunstan and St. Thomas of Canterbury played parts in our history which have parallels in that of Serbia.

A second type is less fully represented. But the re-cluse, the follower of the "angel way of life," has also his place in his countrymen's affection. For, however "national" his conception of religion was and is, the Serbian could recognize that "something better" and reverence the austerity and detachment by which alone it could be attained. This, again, is not peculiar to the Serbian calendar.

But there is a third type which is by far the most characteristic. There are lives of men and women in this book which contain no deed of heroism or voluntary denial. Their stories are not of a struggle against external forces or the enemy within them. The only sense in which their lives may be said to be a struggle is in that sense in which the word is used of the outcast and poor, the broken man and the beaten woman. Their nobility has only one chance of showing itself, and that is in the patient endurance of unmerited and unavoidable suffering. Such saints as Stephen and his wife Angelina, and the later members of the Nemanya dynasty, received no hero-worship. They were always failures—conscious and hopeless failures—failures who made no heroic effort to change their lot. Yet it is these lives which are written with the most touching affection and understanding. We may account for this in part by the singular tenderness which the Slav is so quick to feel not merely for the unfortunate, but for the material or moral failure. But it is probable that its significance lies far more in the circumstances of the lives of Serbians when they lived unfree under the Turks. It has, in fact, somewhat the same meaning as the observance of the anniversary of their great national disaster, Kossovo, as the national day of honour. In those miserable years the patience of a blind prince, the faithfulness of a widowed queen, the misfortunes of

rulers with no one to rule, made a special appeal and had a special lesson. That patient faithfulness among indignities and sufferings which has been such a marked characteristic of this people up to our own times is here described increasing in those who were first called upon to exhibit it. No western people could treat so tenderly of those who were so conspicuously unsuccessful. No western historian will understand this people unless he remembers that the luckless King Stephen is numbered among its saints.

## A NOTE ON SERBIAN HISTORY

THE Serbian Saints have been for the most part the national heroes and their lives are the history of Serbia for the period during which they flourished—the period, that is, during the Middle Ages when Serbia became a free nation and for a time an empire. Any attempt, therefore, to give in this place a complete historical survey would merely result in repetition of much that follows in the lives themselves. The purpose of this note is rather to provide a setting into which the biographies may be fitted, and to fill up some of the gaps caused by the fact that some of Serbia's greatest heroes could not well find a place in the list of her saints owing to certain unfortunate incidents in their early lives.

We may begin, then, with the point in history when the Serbians became the northern neighbours of the Greek Empire somewhere in the seventh century, and had accepted, nominally at least, the Christian religion. In reality they seem to have clung closely to their old pagan nature worship and the new religion took little hold upon them until the ninth century, when Cyril and Methodius came among them as missionaries and gave them a Liturgy in their own tongue. By the tenth century we find the country divided up among a number of small princes, who in turn subdivided their territory among their zhupanēs, or petty chiefs. Their principal enemies were their powerful neighbours, the Bulgarians, who frequently invaded the land and sometimes occupied large parts of it. To this period belongs the story of *Sz.*



*Vladimir* and his martyrdom at the hands of the Bulgarian king, *Vladislav*. During the following century the Bulgarian power rapidly declined, however, and the Greek Emperor found himself in a position to extend his authority northward, so that by the middle of the twelfth century most of the Serbian provinces recognized him as their suzerain.

### THE NEMANYA DYNASTY

It is from this time that the authentic history contained in these lives of the saints begins, for in 1169 Stephen, afterwards known as the monk *St. Simeon*, founded the Nemanya dynasty and the Christian state began to be established. The story of his early struggles in the province of Rascia against his brothers, and his victories over them and his suzerain the Greek Emperor, is told in his life. He succeeded in forming an independent kingdom for himself in Rascia and along the coast of the Adriatic, but when he pressed southward in league with the Bulgarians, and occupied the land round Uskub and Prizren, he met with reverses and finally abdicated in favour of his second son, and became a monk.

Of his three sons, the second, Stephen (*St. Simon*) succeeded his father as Grand Zhupan, the eldest, Vukan, being given only the title of king and the lands along the Adriatic; while the third, Rastko, had already become the monk *Sava*. The position of Stephen was far from being secure. Vukan, disappointed in his hope of succeeding his father, was prepared to serve the interests of the Hungarian king, who was being encouraged by the Pope to take forcible possession of these Orthodox lands. It was at this juncture that *St. Sava*, the youngest brother, returned from his monastery in Mt. Athos to support Stephen, and Vukan contented himself with holding

Rascia as the vassal of Hungary. Vukan died in 1204, and the troubles which occurred in Hungary about this time freed Stephen from the northern peril. Meanwhile, in the south the fourth Crusade had captured Constantinople, and the Latin state which it established began to menace the small Balkan nations. St. Sava now showed the qualities of a statesman by turning the collapse of the Greek Empire to good account. He approached the Emperor and the Patriarch of Nicæa, and in 1219 obtained from them ecclesiastical autonomy for Serbia and the archbishopric for himself—they were in no position to refuse him these important and far-reaching privileges. Not content with this, he proceeded in the following year to get the imperial sanction for the coronation of his brother as King of Serbia, and himself placed the crown on his head. The remainder of his active years he devoted to establishing order in the independent kingdom, travelling through the country on foot, teaching the people and organizing the spiritual and temporal government of the land.

The result of his labours is to be seen in the years that followed. Not one of the next four rulers died in possession of the throne, each of them being driven out owing to rebellions led by their brothers or sons; yet in spite of these divisions, the state held together owing to the strong foundations that had been laid by St. Sava. Rodoslav, Stephen's son, who succeeded him in 1227, was dethroned by his brother Vladislav in 1233, and Vladislav by his younger brother Stephen Urosh I in 1242. Stephen Urosh I reigned till 1276, and was then defeated by his son Dragutin on the Plain of Gatsko, while Dragutin had himself to abdicate in favour of his brother *Urosh II Milutin* five years later. With the accession of Milutin came peace at home and considerable progress. The wealth of the country increased owing to the commer-

cial relations established with Venice and Ragusa, and this increased prosperity showed itself in the great number of churches built at this time. Unlike the church at Studenitza, built by the first Stephen, and most of the ecclesiastical buildings of that day, these churches of Milutin are purely Byzantine in their architecture, a fact probably due to the Greek influence at the court through the marriage of the king with Simonide, the daughter of the Emperor Andronicus. Milutin was also successful in withstanding the Tartar invasion, which destroyed Bulgaria during his reign, and reduced the Tartar prince, Shishman of Widin, to a position of vassalage.

*Stephen Dechanski*, his son, who succeeded him in 1321, received his second name from the monastery of Dechani which he built as a thankoffering for his great victory over the Bulgarians at Kustendil. He did not long survive this victory. As happened so frequently at this period, the fact that he had taken to himself, as second wife, a Greek princess, Mary, led to his downfall. For a Greek party was formed at court and an attempt was made to declare the son of this second marriage heir to the throne in the place of Dushan, the son of the first marriage. Dushan and his adherents raised a rebellion, and the king was captured and strangled in 1331.

The reign of Stephen Dushan (1331-55) marks the summit of Serbian power and glory. Dushan, who does not appear among his country's saints owing to the death of his father, was a military genius. It was his ambition to found an empire which should include the Serbians, Greeks and Bulgarians, and to rule all these lands as Tzar. We cannot follow him through the series of brilliant campaigns by which he overran, and added to his dominions, Macedonia, Albania and Epirus. In 1345 he proclaimed himself Tzar of the Serbians and

Greeks, and raised the archbishopric of Pech to the dignity of a patriarchate, for which latter act the country was laid under an anathema by the Patriarch of Constantinople and was not freed from it till Tzar Lazar secured the recognition of the national patriarchate thirty years later. In 1347 Dushan continued his victorious campaigns, and brought Epirus, Etolia, Acornania and Thessaly within his dominions. During the next few years his astonishing activities were devoted to the codification of the laws, customs, and ordinances of his predecessors and their solemn promulgation as the law of his empire. But when the complete realization of his dream seemed practically assured, the storm which had been threatening the East so long broke out with fury, and at the very moment when the military genius of Dushan was most needed by his country and by Europe to stem the Turkish invasions, he suddenly died (December 1355).

By the untimely death of Dushan, not only was the empire he had founded doomed to fall to pieces, but the only hope of his own country's independence disappeared. The weakness of the Greek Empire, which had given him his chance, meant that there was one barrier the less between Serbia and the Turkish invaders. Moreover, the Hungarians chose this moment of calamity for their southern neighbours to attack them, and both Bulgaria and Serbia were overrun and in part annexed, many of the inhabitants, especially in the former country, being forcibly made Catholics. The reign of Dushan's son and successor, *St. Urosh* (1356-72), a weak man in a position requiring exceptional strength of character, is pitiful reading. In such distracting times he ceased to be noticed, and it is the rebel, Vukashin, who had taken most of his empire from him, who meets the Turks and dies in battle against them on the river Maritza in 1371.

With this defeat all the Serbian provinces in the south around Uskub were lost. Tzar Urosh himself died childless and forgotten in the same year, and with him the great Nemanya dynasty became extinct.

### THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE AGAINST THE TURKS

Such of the Serbian land as still remained to them was now divided between two rulers—Tvrtko, who governed in Bosnia, and *Lazar Grebelyanovich*. These two princes united their forces and inflicted a defeat on the Turks in 1387, but two years later Sultan Murat returned with a large army, and on the Plain of Kossovo the Serbian army of Lazar was defeated and Lazar himself taken prisoner and beheaded on the 15th of June, 1389. This famous battle and the causes which led to the defeat is sufficiently described in the life of St. Lazar, and need not detain us here. It is characteristic of the Serbian people that they should regard it as the greatest moment in their history, for though overcome they fought and fell in defence of the Cross menaced by the Crescent.

Henceforth their rulers reigned with the title of despot only as vassals of the Turks, paying them tribute in money and men, and on these terms Lazar's son, Stephen Lazarevich, continued to govern the land from 1389 to 1427. At the beginning of the fifteenth century they were able to improve their lot a little by becoming vassals of Hungary instead of the Sultan, and received from that country the province of Machva, with Belgrade, in order that they might act as a buffer state between their new suzerains and the Turks. This arrangement continued through the reigns of George Brankovich (1427-56) and his son Lazar. But after the death of the latter in



1458 the Sultan again invaded the land and converted it into a Pashalik, so that Serbian despots who owned anything beside their title ceased to exist. The stories of the unhappy lot of the *despot Stephen*, his wife *Angelina*, and his two sons, will sufficiently illustrate the misery of the last days of the Serbian rulers. Their brethren in the north, amongst whom they sought refuge, the relics of the kingdom which Tvrtko founded in Bosnia, shared the same fate a few years later, and Serbian independence was wholly at an end.

We need not dwell upon the history of the next three hundred years. Thousands of the people were enslaved and sold in the markets of the East. Thousands emigrated to Hungary rather than live under the hated rule of the Turks. Those who were left did not lightly accept their fate, many of them forming themselves into bands of outlaws which spent their time in wreaking vengeance on the oppressors whenever the chance occurred. The exploits of these Haiduks, as they were called, are the favourite subject of the well-known national songs, and they served to keep alive something of the national spirit during these terrible centuries. These songs and their religion were the only means of expression left to the people, so that it is not surprising to find that the Serbian Church has the character of a national rather than a religious institution. But whatever their pains and misery their watchword continued to be, "Za krst tchasni i slobodu zlatnu"—"For the venerated Cross and for golden Freedom."

It was not till the year 1804 that the fight for freedom could really be renewed. In that year they began their rebellion under Kara George and met with astonishing successes. They fought throughout the Napoleonic wars, Austria and Russia being each of them glad of such diversions as the Serbian peasants could make in their

neighbourhood. But neither of these Powers was prepared to stand by her when she ceased to serve their purpose, and they infamously deserted the gallant men who had fought for them at the Treaty of Bucharest in 1812. The work of liberation had almost to be begun over again when Milosh Obrenovich raised the standard of revolt three years later. Then began a struggle for freedom which lasted nearly through a generation. Unable to drive the Turks from their lands altogether, they had to content themselves with obtaining their independence piecemeal, sometimes fighting alone, sometimes receiving the somewhat reluctant support of the diplomats of Russia. In 1830 Milosh Obrenovich was recognized by the Porte as hereditary Prince, and the national Church was restored, with its own native priests and metropolitan, but the fortresses were still held by the Turks and a tax was still paid to them. Finally, during the years 1876-8 the Turks were entirely driven out and, by the Treaty of Berlin in the latter year, Serbia recovered her complete independence and her territory was increased. In 1882 Milan Obrenovich was proclaimed King of Serbia—her first king since the fall of Lazar on the Plain of Kossovo. And the Balkan wars of 1912 restored to her those lands in the south which had formed a part of the fatherland of so many of her saints.

So Serbia lived again. That such a return to life should have been possible after so many years of maimed existence requires some explanation. There are, no doubt, more causes than one why the spirit of the nation was not killed, but there is no doubt as to which was the principal factor. It was their Church which kept alive in the heart of this people their love for their home and their national aspirations more than any other thing. It was their Church which preserved them from being

wholly merged into the Ottoman Empire. The pages that follow tell of the birth and early growth of this indomitable spirit, and reflect that devotion to God and His Church which was to be the salvation of this people and, please God, shall be again.

# LIVES OF THE SERBIAN SAINTS

## THE LIFE OF SAINT JOHN VLADIMIR, SERBIAN PRINCE<sup>1</sup>

THE holy and glorious prince and martyr John Vladimir was sprung from a noble family of the town Alba, which town he ruled together with Illyricum and Dalmatia. Hvalimir, his grandfather had three sons, Petrislav, Dragomir and Miroslav. Petrislav ruled over Zeta, Dragomir over Trebinje and Hlevna, Miroslav over Podgorye. When Hvalimir was dead, and Miroslav had died without children, the Serbian state fell to Petrislav, whose son and successor was the blessed Vladimir.

From his youth this prince was full of the gifts of the spirit, gentle, quiet, pious and pure in life; hating all evil pleasures, he kept himself from them and gave thought rather for his subjects, ruling them wisely. Wherefore he was beloved of all. And it happened that the Bulgarian king, Samuil, began to make war with a great host against the state of this blessed king. Vladimir, that the blood of his country might not be shed, went with his army into the mountains, where the host of Samuil soon encompassed him. Now, they were

<sup>1</sup> The exact dates are uncertain, but he lived during the end of the ninth century and the beginning of the tenth.

in the place called Kosogor, and the serpents were many in number and very poisonous, so that no little harm was done to the soldiers. But the saint prayed unto the Lord, and straightway the serpents ceased to bite; and from that time unto this day they will vex no man.

When Samuil saw that he could not take Vladimir by force of arms, he determined to do this by guile. And so he gave fair promises of safety to Vladimir, who came down then to this breaker of oaths. But the treacherous Samuil sent him to his capital and put him in prison and pillaged all his country, laying waste with fire Illyricum, Ragusa, Kotor, Bosnia and Rascia, returning with his army laden with spoil.

Now Samuil had a daughter, Kossara by name, who had a great love for the poor and the prisoners, and went often to visit and comfort them. And when she saw Vladimir, who was young and wise, straightway she loved him. But he was always fasting and praying. One night, however, there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, who told him that the time of his deliverance from prison drew near, and that afterwards he would be martyred. But Kossara was praying her father that he would give to her this prisoner to be her husband; and since he could not refuse this to his daughter, Samuil brought Vladimir from prison and gave him Kossara his daughter to be his wife. Moreover, he returned into his hand all his estates and sent him back with all honour and many gifts. And when Vladimir came back to his people bringing his wife with him, he was received with great gladness. Then did he tell his wife that she must keep herself ever virgin, because that life is the life of the angels: and she was obedient to him, so that they lived in chastity and every virtue.

And it came to pass at this time that the autocrat, the Greek Emperor, Basil Porphyrogennatos, came with a



great host against Samuil, the Bulgarian tsar, and, vanquishing his army, pressed on even to Ochrida. Samuil died from sorrow of heart, and after him Radomir his son came to the throne. But after he had reigned one year he was killed by his brother, the son of his mother by a former marriage, Vladislav by name, through the counsel of the Emperor Basil. And so Basil, having overcome the whole Bulgarian state, came with his army against the Serbian country. But St. Vladimir gathered his army and defended himself with great might, so that the Emperor had to return again homewards.

Now it happened that the king, the holy Vladimir, was in the forest which was nigh unto the town, with three of his voievodes. And there came an eagle flying through the forest bearing a shining cross upon its back. And it let the cross fall to the ground and flew away leaving it lying upon the earth. They got down from their horses and bowed themselves before Jesus crucified upon the cross. Then St. Vladimir gave orders and built on that place a church. And when at great cost the church had been built, he kept there the hallowed cross and went to it by day and by night to pray. Then he understood that he was come near to the time when he should receive the crown of the martyr, which he himself desired with all his heart.

Now the Bulgarian king, Vladislav, doubted in his heart of the holy Vladimir, and he was counselled by the Greek Emperor to slay him by craft. Therefore Vladislav came to the capital of Vladimir and pitched his tents before the town, and called Vladimir to come out to him that they might speak together of the needs of their peoples. But Vladimir did not will to go, and delayed. Then Vladislav sent unto him two bishops and made an oath on the Holy Gospels and the venerated

Cross. And Kossara, because she would not that her husband should go, went herself to speak with her brother: and he, like a second Judas, with kisses and soft words, lied unto her. Kossara then, believing the word of this murderer, went back again and sent her husband to him, for she could not see "the sword dipped in honey." When Vladislav saw Vladimir coming to him straightway he fell upon him and struck him with his sword. But he was not harmed, nor did he fear, but said to him, "It is your will to kill me, my brother, but you cannot." Then he took his own sword and gave it to Vladislav, saying unto him, "Take it and kill me, for I am ready to die, as were Isaac and Abel." And the murderer, blinded and terrible with fury, took the sword and cut off his head. Then did St. Vladimir take his head into his hands and go quickly to that church where the eagle had come with the cross, and he sang as he went, "I was glad when they said unto me, we will go unto the house of the Lord." And when he came to the church he said, "Into Thy hands, O my Lord, I commend my spirit." Then the murderer, full of shame and afraid because of this glorious wonder, fled away with his men.

And so the blessed Vladimir received the crown of the martyr and passed from the kingdom of this world to the Kingdom of Heaven on the twenty-second day of May in the year 1015. Kossara his wife buried the body of the holy king in the church with great splendour in the presence of the bishops and all the clergy and the people: then, for the true love she bore her blessed husband, she shut herself up in his church and never left it again all the rest of her days, giving herself to fasting and prayers.

But the murderer Vladislav, while he hoped to keep his Bulgarian state still in peace, thought to add to it

also the Serbian country. So he came with an army before Dyrrachium, and in high hope surrounded the town. But as he sat alone in his tent taking meat, suddenly, while his thoughts dwelt on other things, he saw Vladimir seeking to behead him. Being in very great fear of him, he called upon his guard for help; and in their presence an invisible hand slew him, and, like Herod Agrippa, he gave up his sinful soul in the year 1017. His army, being afraid because of this punishment which had fallen upon its leader, fled to their own country. Thus, he who purposed to rob another of his home lost his own in this life and that other which may be ours in the life everlasting.

Holy oil arose from the relics of St. Vladimir, and he healed divers ills, which indeed he does to this day, and he tamed not a little the barbarous ferocity of the Turks.

Through his prayers may the All Merciful God look upon his people, bring their martyrdom to an end, and save us from the heavy yoke of the cruel Turks, who are as the wild beasts. To the glory of God in Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, one in essence and unchanging for ever and ever. Amen.

## THE LIFE OF SAINT SIMEON, GIVER OF THE OIL<sup>1</sup>

OUR godly father Simeon was the son of a Serbian prince, Gradina, who ruled in the country of Rascia. He was born in Diocletia, near to the Adriatic Sea, baptized in Rascia, which is to-day Novi-Bazar, in the church of the Princes of the Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, and received the name of Stephen. The sacrament was given to him by Leontius, the bishop of Rascia in that day. When his youth was passed and he had come to man's estate, he ruled the country of his father with wisdom and justice. From the first he showed his love for the holy Church, and in all he had to do he acted justly in obedience to the command of the Gospels. In his desire to show how deep was his affection for the Church, and most of all for that of his baptism, he built the church to the honour and glory of the All Holy Mother of God in the town Toplitsa on the river Kosanitsa, and another to the honour and memory of St. Nicholas on the river Banya.

His own brothers had no good-will towards him, for they envied his good fame. So they took him and put him in prison. From thence our Lord delivered him, by the hand of His great martyr St. George, and He

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Nemanya, who took the name of Simeon when he became a monk, was the founder of the Nemanya dynasty, which ruled Serbia 1169-1372. He himself was Grand Zhupan 1169-1196, in which year he abdicated in favour of his second son Stephen.

gave him victory wholly over his enemies, so that he drove them from the fatherland. But those exiles did not forgive him, and raised their hands against their brother yet again, receiving soldiers from the Greek Emperor, so that they had many mercenaries. But again the Lord was against them, and not only were they crushed and destroyed, but one of the brothers was drowned in the river Tara near Zvechany, where the battle was. This victory, given to him by the Lord, Stephen used very wisely. He increased the borders of his kingdom and set up the first Serbian state, which now had only one autocrat and was independent of the Greek Emperor, nor was it any longer as in the time before, when every Zhupan ruled his own small country by himself. Now this was not pleasing to the Emperor Andronicus, and he came with his armies to destroy the young Serbian state. Yet was he forced to go back again, for he was overcome and lost twenty of his fortresses. Thereby these provinces came within the kingdom of Serbia at this time—Serbia, Old Serbia, Sirmie and a part of Slavonia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro, a part of Albania and Macedonia.

Then there was peace in all the countries of Serbia. And it came into the mind of Stephen Nemanya, first autocrat of Serbia, to build monuments in his state to the glory of God, Who is almighty and rules over all things, and that he might strengthen the Serbian people in the orthodox faith and provide things useful for the souls of his subjects. Therefore he built a church in the honour and memory of the great martyr George, called by the people George Stubovy,<sup>1</sup> and another he built to the Holy Archangel Michael in Skoplje, and a third to St. Pantelemon in Nish, and a fourth to the All Holy Mother of God, which was called Studenitz.

<sup>1</sup> The Pillar.

This his devotion to the Holy Orthodox Church gave the saint great zeal to destroy utterly all heresies which arose among the people through the work of false teachers.<sup>1</sup> And when he was stricken in years so that he could no longer bear the weight of rule, and when he took thought for the salvation of his soul, he decided in his heart to lay aside this burden and to place it upon his first-born son Stephen. Which thing he did on a day set apart before all whom he assembled to him. Having made an end of this, the son being now king in the room of his father, straightway, on the next day, the godly king, with his wife and children, went to Studenitza, where he became the monk Simeon.<sup>2</sup> In that monastery he remained fasting and following the rules of prayer. After the space of two years he went and gave rich gifts to his son Sava on the Sveta Gora (Holy Mountain Athos), giving praise to the Lord because he saw the youngest of the sons of his heart. First he stayed in the monastery Vatoped, to which he gave of the gifts he had brought, and after that he visited other churches and gave them costly presents. Then did he make request to those who had the power to grant it, and he was allowed to build again the monastery Khilindar. And then he built the beautiful church in memory of the Coming of the All Holy Mother of God to the Temple and gave this holy house to the children of his fatherland, so that all who came thence might find a refuge there. When he had made

<sup>1</sup> Specially the heretics Bogumile. As they were like the Quakers and followers of Tolstoi in their attitude towards war, they were very dangerous to the state in those days. When the Turks took Bosnia in 1463 they became Musulmans.

<sup>2</sup> In the Orthodox Church there is only one order of monks, those who follow the rule laid down by St. Basil the Great of Cappadocia. There are, in this rule, two degrees: the lesser vow and the great vow. The latter is very severe, and is called the "angel way of life." They hardly ever speak.



an end of the foundation of the church, he began to build the walls and the cells and a refectory also. And all things being done, he sent a letter to his son, the autocrat Stephen, telling him, among other messages : " My son, as I gave to you the Lavra <sup>1</sup> of Studenitza, so now I give to you the Lavra of Khilindar, that you may keep it ever under your care, both you and your sons after you." And besides all this he prayed for and received letters from the Greek Emperor, which established the rights over this new monastery for the Serbian people from generation to generation.

Now after he had spent some long while in following the good life of the spirit and the rule of prayer, the holy Simeon felt in his heart that the hour of his death drew near, and he spoke to his son Sava in secret : " My child, the hour when we must part is at hand, and it may be the will of the Lord to be by me. You must serve me now, for I am taking thought for the salvation of my soul." When he heard this, the holy Sava shed tears and fell upon his neck, answering him : " The will of the Lord be with thee, my father, and as I have been upheld unto this day through thy prayers, be thou still my defence with thy good prayers if it be indeed that thou art going to the Christ." Then the father embraced his son, and blessed him and kissed him and made him promise that he would bring his body again to Studenitza.

When it was known on the Holy Mountain that the hour of the far voyage of the holy monk Simeon was come, there came to him day by day the brothers from all the monasteries to bid him farewell. And he, calling upon each by his name, commended himself to their prayers. St. Sava stayed close to him the while to read the Psalms. In good time the saint received the Holy

<sup>1</sup> A Lavra is a monastery which has been built by a king.

Sacrament, while he was still clear in mind and soul, and on the next day, since his sickness increased more and more, Sava his son bore him into the church. And there he lay so ill that he could no more speak, but only looking upon the purity of the picture of Jesus Christ, he said slowly as he died, "Let everything which hath breath praise the Lord." With this song he ended his life upon earth, his soul ascending to the Lord on the thirteenth day of February, twelve hundred years after Christ. St. Sava, with many others of the brethren, buried his body in a marble sarcophagus in the church, when all the rites had been duly fulfilled.

It came to pass after his death that the holy Simeon appeared to his son and made known to him the blessed state of his life by Jesus the Saviour. Now, although Sava rejoiced exceedingly at his coming, he wished that a yet greater glory might come though his father, wherefore he prayed by day and by night to God that He would glorify His great Name through His servant Sava in whatsoever way He would. And when, in summer time, they made memorial of his father Simeon at the midnight office, while they sang *Te Deum*, the church was suddenly filled with a very sweet smell arising from the oil which came forth from the body of St. Simeon. Then all those who were in the church with St. Sava, smelling that fragrance and being led by the sound of the boiling oil to the place where the body lay, cried with glad voices, "Have mercy upon us, O Lord," and prostrating themselves, kissed the tomb and anointed themselves with the oil. And St. Sava gave great thanks to God, and took one small bottle of the oil and sent it to his brother, the autocrat Stephen. And he, greatly desiring to have such a holy thing in his own land, prayed his brother, the holy Sava, to bring back the body of their father.

Which thing he did, in obedience to the will of their dead father. And on the night of the thirteenth day of February, while Sava was celebrating the Holy Liturgy with the bishops in the church of Studenitza, before the autocrat himself and all the nobles, clergy and people, once again the oil rose suddenly from the tomb and from the pictures of St. Simeon painted on the walls of the church. Then all who were in the church anointed themselves with the oil, great and small they anointed themselves, but especially those who were sick. The body which did this great wonder lay at Studenitza till St. Sava came back again as Serbian Archbishop. And when he built the monastery of Zicha and there set up his Apostolic see, he moved the relics into the Church of the Ascension in that monastery. Of all that befell them in the later days of the weakness of the Serbian state and the civil wars and the coming of the Turks, the tradition of the people has many things to tell, but they agree not one with the other, nor are they certainly true. There is, indeed, one story alone which may be believed, to wit, that the relics of holy Simeon were again moved to Studenitza in those days when the Turks were invading the country and that they were placed in the church of Holy Nicholas. The rising of the holy oil came then almost to an end, for it was the will of the Lord, to whom be all honour and glory from generation to generation! Amen.

## THE LIFE OF SAINT SAVA (1169-1236)

ST. SAVA, the first Serbian Archbishop, the Illuminator and Wonder-maker, was the son of the great prince Stephen Nemanya, the Autocrat of Diocletia, Dalmatia, Travonia, Bosnia, Slavonia and Rascia. In holy baptism he was called Rastko, which is "to grow good in the Lord." From the time that he was a child he was wise, with a heart full of light, of a fair countenance and beloved by all men. But Stephen and Anna, blessed with every Christian virtue, loved this son more than all.

For he was learned in the Holy Scriptures, righteous in his dealings, just, and with no envy in his heart; he shrank from all those empty longings which weaken soul and body; and every day he went with a glad heart to the Holy Liturgy, full of love and gentleness and reverence.

When he was eighteen years of age his parents desired him to be married. And it happened that in those very days the monks of the Holy Mountain of Athos came to his father by the will of the Lord to beg alms. When Rastko saw them he rejoiced greatly, and questioned with them about all things in the Holy Mountain of Athos and about the life of the monks there, and with joy he said to them, "I see, my fathers, that the Lord has sent your holinesses to comfort me, a sinner. Now do I see without any doubt what is to be my way of life. Indeed, I would not stay here one day more lest haply envy change my heart and my desire. I would fly by

myself to the Holy Mountain of Athos, but that I knew not the way, and I fear that, as I was wandering hither and thither, my father would take me and bring me back, for his arm reaches far ; and thus I should cause sorrow and trouble to my father, and bring sadness upon myself because I should not have come to that goal which I desire in the Lord." Then one of those monks, a man well stricken in years, answered him, " Great is the love between parent and child, and it may not be broken in twain. But our Lord Jesus Christ told us we might have to leave them for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. Come quickly and fulfil the desire of your heart, for it shall bring great blessings upon you and upon many others. I will be your guide and servant on this good way you seek, and I will bring you to the Holy Mountain of the Lord." At these words the young man rejoiced in his heart, and said to the monk, " Blessed art thou from God, my father, for thou hast strengthened my spirit." Then he went quickly to his parents and prayed their blessing that he might go into the mountains to hunt ; and he took his way, with his men and the monks, to go a-hunting. And in the dark he covertly left his men and travelling with speed all through the night, at dawn was far away with the monks.

At daybreak Rastko's men sought for him in the mountains, and when they found him not they returned to his parents and told them all that had happened. They, when they heard the sad tidings of their son, in their great sorrow of heart shed many tears, and gave way wholly to their grief, spending their days and their nights in weeping and mourning for him. But after some time had passed the prince came to himself, and said to his wife, the mother of the boy, " It is not meet that we should sorrow for him always. I trust in the Lord that He, Who gave him to me, will grant me to see his face

once again." He sent one of his head men straightway, and many other young nobles with him, to the Holy Mountain of Athos, giving him commandment to bring back Rastko if he should light upon him there. When they came to the Holy Mountain they spoke with those they met concerning Rastko, telling them the number of his years and describing the beauty of his countenance. And these gave answer to them, "Such an one as you seek came no long while before you to the Russian Monastery of St. Pantelemon." When they heard this, they went quickly to the monastery which was told to them, and finding him whom they sought they rejoiced greatly.

Rastko, seeing them, wondered at the love of his parents, and taking apart him whom his father had sent, begged him privily not to carry out his father's commands or at least to delay. But the head man answered to him, "Master, if we had found you in monk's garb we would have carried your petition to your father, but now, since by the will of the Lord we find you in such guise as your parents would like to see, we beg you will go with us." When the prince heard this, he went and begged the higumen<sup>1</sup> to watch and pray all the night through, and during the time of the officé to make him a monk. And so it was; for Rastko laid aside the dress of his old life, and, being made monk, received the name of Sava. This profession was made in the church of John, the Holy Prophet and Forerunner of Jesus Christ.

When the office was at an end, all left the church. But the prince was not among them. Then the soldiers began to seek for him everywhere in the church, and when they found him not they were full of wrath, and because they thought that the fathers were hiding him they threatened them with death. While this tumult was at

<sup>1</sup> The higumen is the head of a monastery.



its height the prince came in saying with a quiet voice, "Here am I whom you seek," and showing himself to them in his monk's dress. And when they grieved he said to them, "I beseech you, be not so sad for me, but give thanks to the Lord on my behalf because His grace has done this thing. He on Whom I trust will do with me whatsoever is pleasing to His holy will. So now I pray you go home again." He gave them then in a bundle his former princely clothes, and the hair that was cut from his head, and said to them, "Take now these tokens and bring them as a sign that you found me in the life and grace of the Lord as a monk with the name Sava." Then he gave them a letter to his parents: and they, taking the clothes and the hair and the letter, went their way.

When it was known through all the Holy Mountain that the son of the Serbian prince had become monk, all desired to look upon him. Now there was a feast in Vatoped, the imperial monastery, on the holy day of the Annunciation to the All Holy Mother of God, and Sava was summoned to it. And on his coming all received him very lovingly, and prayed him as a royal prince to remain in the Vatoped Lavra. He, rendering obedience to the fathers and the higumen, stayed there some time and afterwards he craved their leave and went on pilgrimage to all the monasteries and cells and to the peak of the Holy Mountain. Then he returned to Vatoped, where he prayed unceasingly, with watchings and fastings, and rendered obedience.

After some time his parents sent to him no little gold and all things for the service of the Church, both gold and silver and curtains, gold embroidered, with many more things which the monastery had need of. When Sava received this gold he began to build churches and cells. He built a church to the Nativity of the All Holy Mother of God, and another to the holy John

Chrysostom, and a third to the Transfiguration of the Holy Lord, together with many cells. After this he took from the church of Vatoped the roof of stone and covered it with lead, as it is unto this day. So was he a benefactor to the Church. And he wrote to his father, and among other things he said, "Now I beseech you, my father, rise up and fulfil the order of Jesus Christ, 'Whosoever will follow Me, let him deny himself and give up all that is his.' Lay aside all those things of little moment, take to yourself the way of meekness and follow me, that together we may live in this desert doing the will of God." In the next year came his father to him at the Vatoped monastery, and he had been already made monk by the name of Simeon. A short while afterwards Rastko took the old man to all the monasteries, and again came back with him to Vatoped.

Now it happened that some one of the brethren must needs go to Constantinople on behalf of the monastery. The higumen would have liked to go himself, but he doubted of his ability and besought the most wise Sava to go for him. So Sava went to the Emperor, and was received by him very graciously. When he had done all the bidding of the monastery, the Emperor not only granted his request, but promised to do even more for the monastery. And Sava, perceiving that the time was favourable, made this prayer to the Emperor, and spoke thus: "My Emperor, if thy country is willing that the monastery of Khilindar, which now lies in ruins, should be built up once again, I and my father will rebuild it, and it shall be called ours." The Emperor gladly gave his consent, and to this end he granted him letters under his seal and dismissed the holy father with imperial gifts. On his return St. Sava told the higumen and the brothers that all their petitions had been granted. On the day following he showed to them the Emperor's

letter about building again the monastery of Khilindar, and he proposed to the council of the brethren that they should allow that monastery, when it had been built again, to be called Serbian, that whosoever of the Serbians desired to live there might find in it a home and a sure refuge. And the council, after no long deliberation, gladly consented that Khilindar should be called the Serbian Monastery. When all this had been done, Simeon and Sava wrote a letter to the autocrat of the Serbian land, Stephen,<sup>1</sup> telling him of their desire to build a special monastery for themselves and all who should come after them of their race and language. Stephen then, understanding their desire, sent to them much silver and gold and promised to them more, as much as they had need. And now began the building, after that holy Sava had prayed that the Heavenly Father would look upon him, and His Holy Spirit give him light, and the Lord God help him to build the house for the glory of His Mother, the Ever-Virgin Mary, and that it might ever be a refuge for the children of his fatherland, that whosoever took shelter there might find a safe haven within its walls. First he dug the foundation and built the refectory and cells. The church itself he adorned with golden pictures and vessels and with rich curtains: the walls also were enriched with gold, and the church was dedicated to the Coming of the All Holy Mother of God to the Temple.<sup>2</sup> When all was done and it had its own buildings in Kareya,<sup>3</sup> holy Sava went to Constantinople to the Emperor Alexis Comnenus, who was a kinsman of his, and petitioned the Emperor

<sup>1</sup> The son of King Stephen Nemanya, the elder brother of Sava, who later became the monk Simon (see p. 37).

<sup>2</sup> Khilindar has played always a great part in Serbian history.

<sup>3</sup> Kareya is that part of Mt. Athos where each monastery of the mountain has a house for business purposes. It is thus a centre in which the interests of all the communities can be discussed and action taken in common.

to give him letters under his seal for Khilindar and its lands. Now while the saint was in that city, living in the monastery Evergetitza, there came to him a wise woman and spoke thus : "O saint and lover of God, the Lord and the All Holy Mother of the Lord have bidden me give you this command. There are in the Holy Mountain, within thy monastery in a certain place"—saying where the place was—"two treasures of gold. Seek and you will find them. Take them and do good in the Lord." The saint, wondering at this message, gave thanks to the Lord ; and after receiving his blessing he kissed the patriarch and came to the Holy Mountain.

It came to pass after some time that the hour of his departure to Jesus came for St. Simeon. And he spake thus to his loving son : "The hour of my going is very near, my child. When in due time the Lord shall bless them, take the remains of my sinful body and bring them back to the land of my people, and let them lie in the monastery Studenitza which I myself built." Then in peaceful dreams he died and was laid to rest in a marble tomb. And the holy Sava, in memory of his father, gave such great alms to the poor and the strangers that he had nothing left to him. Then it was that he remembered the wise woman of Constantinople who had told him of the hidden treasure, and he came to the place she had made known to him, and after he had dug a little while the earth gave up its hidden treasure and he brought it to his monastery. One part of that treasure he gave to the monastery of the All Holy Mother of God in Constantinople ; a second to the monasteries in the Holy Mountain ; a third to the monks of the desert ; a fourth to his own monastery and to the poor.

So, when all this that had been entrusted to him was finished, he retired for some time to Kareya, keeping

silence there and performing the rule of prayer. And it happened once that, as he prayed, there appeared to him St. Simeon saying to him, "Thy spiritual life and thy prayers and thy alms are come up before the Lord, and because of them there is for you and for me a place prepared. But first must thou accept of the Lord the grace and power which He sends thee. Teach and enlighten thy fatherland : bring to Jesus thy people : and after that thou hast seen the Holy Places and been the mother of good deeds to many people, thou wilt come to us." When he heard this the saint rejoiced very greatly, for he felt that he was in the heavenly places.

Afterward the saint desired, while he was yet on earth, to see the glory of his father, and he began to pray thus : "O Lord, Thou didst permit me to see my father's glorious state in secret, but by this that Thou has granted me, I alone am made glad. O my Lord, Thou speakest and it is done. Hear the words of Thy servant and send Thy All Holy Spirit to renew the body of him who suffered for Thy sake and now lies here in a strange land. Give to his body the dew of Thy grace, and let him lie at rest in Thy house, full of Thy mercy, and grant that there may arise from his body the holy oil with its sweet fragrance." And as all the brothers were praying, suddenly the church was filled with a fragrance more sweet than words can tell, and there was heard a sound from the oil like the sound of water that boils. Then all came to the tomb of holy Simeon and saw how that the oil rose from his body ; and St. Sava took a little bottle of this oil and sent it to his brother, the autocrat Stephen.

After this St. Sava was made deacon and priest in his monastery, and then, at Salonika, was made archimandrite of Khilindar.

And it came to pass that at this time there fell great

troubles on the Serbian country. Vukan arose against his brother Stephen, the ruler of the state; much blood was shed, and many of the people had to fly from the land. In this distress, Stephen called upon his brother, for the sake of the Lord, to come back to his fatherland to bring peace and to bless the country. When he heard this thing, he began to weep for sorrow of heart and determined to go and comfort the sad heart of his brother, at the same time fulfilling the commandment of his father. He prayed to the Lord God with many tears that He would direct his way by His will. Then he took the remains of his holy father and departed with some of the brethren. The autocrat Stephen, when he had word of his coming, went with all the clergy and great nobles of his state to greet his brother and the honoured body of his father. They met in the land of the Greeks, and both with brotherly love bore the body to the monastery Studenitza and laid it in the marble tomb newly made ready.

When all who came for this festival had departed, there remained only in Studenitza holy Sava and his monks, awaiting the day when the great wonder of the body of holy Simeon should occur again. When that day had come the autocrat arrived with a great company of nobles and all the bishops with many of the clergy, to perform the all-night office and the Divine Liturgy with holy Sava. And they rejoiced when it was given them also to see all that which had happened in Khilindar, for the sound was heard like unto the sound of boiling water, and the oil arose from the body; then St. Sava crossed himself with it and the autocrat Stephen his brother; the like did all the rest, and those who were sick were healed.

After this the saint continued still in Studenitza, which he named the Lavra of St. Simeon, and he gave



the monastery its rule of life. Then like an apostle he travelled through all his fatherland, teaching the people the divine dogmas of the orthodox faith, building churches, setting forth the method of singing and praising the Lord in the churches as it was done at the Holy Mountain of Athos. While he was so doing he was continually giving thought to the enmity between his brothers. He long time urged Vukan and at last brought him to penitence and confession of his sins before his brother Stephen, so that he received forgiveness and promised to him love and obedience. From this time the Serbian state began to grow in power and the orthodox faith to become strong. Also St. Sava founded now the great church of the Ascension of Our Lord in Zicha, which afterwards became the seat of the first Serbian archbishop.

It came to pass that the autocrat was forced to declare war against Strez, a prince of Bulgaria. He in times past, being in danger from his own people, had come to Stephen : and Stephen had received him and given him estates for his support. But when this prince had become a little rich he had grown proud, and by his cruel acts had grieved the Lord and his people ; finally, he had made a league with the Greek and the Bulgarian kings and declared war on him who had aided him in the hour of misfortune. St. Sava desired to avoid the shedding of the blood of his fellow-orthodox and sought to keep his brother from making war. He went himself to the camp of the enemy and with all gentleness spoke to Strez, bringing to him the Gospel message of peace, recalling to his mind the old lovingkindness of Stephen, the fear of God, the punishment for the breaking of an oath, and the reward of sin. But Strez, whose heart was set like a flint, being reckless and full of envy, set at nought all the teaching and counsel of the holy Sava.

Wherefore St. Sava, when he saw that he was relentless, said to him : "It was only my zeal for the good of our people and of you that made me speak so. But since you will not follow the Lord and us, swift misfortune shall come upon you." And he went his way. When St. Sava came back to his own encampment he raised his hands to the Lord and opened his mouth in prayer, speaking from the depth of his heart and soul : "O Lord, make haste to help us, for our trust is in Thee, and grant that our enemies may not rejoice over us sinners, but that they all may see that Thy grace is upon us. May Thy All Holy Name be glorified." At once he saw in the spirit what would come to pass, and he returned to his brother the same night. And the sinful Strez, lying asleep on his bed, cried aloud suddenly : "Ah ! Sava, Sava !" All those who were by him asked, "What is come to thee ?" He, hardly breathing, answered them, "Some terrible young men, sent by Serbian Sava, attacked me and took from me my sword and pierced my heart." He prayed them therefore to call St. Sava ; and they went quickly to seek him, but found him not. So Strez perished that same night, and St. Sava brought peace and many blessings to his fatherland.<sup>1</sup>

Afterwards, feeling in himself the desire for the silence of the desert, he appointed an higumen for Studenitza, a man well tried and worthy to take his place, and bidding farewell to his brother Stephen and kissing the tomb of his father, he returned to his monastery Khilindar. And after some short while he went from there to his silent cell in Kareya.

It came to pass by the providence of the Lord, that some few years after this, holy Sava went to the Greek Emperor Theodore Laska on behalf of his monastery. The Emperor received him very graciously, in part

<sup>1</sup> But see death of Strez, p. 41.

because it was seemly so to do, in part because he was akin to him—for the nephew of Sava, Radoslav, had married the daughter of the Emperor. Here St. Sava, when he had brought to a good end the affairs of his monastery, desired to do something of use to his fatherland also. Wherefore, taking to heart the counsel sent him by the Lord, he prayed first to God and came afterward to the Emperor, saying to him: "The Lord, who wills salvation for all men, of His grace drove out all heresies from my country through the deeds of my father. One thing we lack still in our state—our own Serbian archbishop. Therefore I beseech your imperial clemency to advise the holy patriarch to consecrate one of the brothers who are with me that he may be archbishop of the Serbian land." The Emperor gladly agreed to this, and summoned to his presence the patriarch and his synod, together with his nobles and the brothers that were with St. Sava, and with them he took counsel which of them he should direct to be archbishop. And when they had prayed, the Emperor spake to the holy Sava and said: "Thy brethren are good and holy men, but it is on you and not on them that this grace should be bestowed, according to the counsel which our hearts have been vouchsafed. Wherefore it is the Lord's will that thou be the first archbishop of thy fatherland, its first apostle and teacher." So said all those who were assembled with him also. St. Sava long time refused, but as all urged him without ceasing he gave way, and being thus elected, he was consecrated to be archbishop of the Serbian land by the holy patriarch of Constantinople, German, in presence of the Emperor and all his nobles.

Holy Sava thus accepted the lot which the Lord had given him. But he began to think now concerning the great distance which lay between the Serbian land and Constantinople, concerning the great cost of so long

a journey and the many gifts which he and those who came after him would have to make whenever they came to Constantinople ; the frequent wars also between east and west, and concerning dissensions in the synod about the persons elected and the coming to that city to be consecrated. So he went to the Emperor and prayed him on this wise : " My Emperor, enlightened of the Lord, thou hast treated us with perfect love and mercy, but I beg thee of thy clemency establish that from this time it may not be needful that the archbishop of the Serbian land should come here to be consecrated, but let him be elected and consecrated by his own bishops." This request was not very pleasing to the Emperor and the patriarch, but for the great love they bore him, they gave their consent. So the patriarch, with all the synod, wrote letters with their blessing and gave them to St. Sava, together with the bishop's staff and vestments. And the Emperor also gave him letters and let him depart.

When St. Sava came back to the Holy Mountain men came to him from all the mountain to Khilindar for his blessing. He received them all lovingly, comforted them, and gave presents unto them, asking their prayers also. At their request he went to many of their monasteries to offer the Liturgy and to make many persons deacons and priests, and afterward he returned to his monastery. He taught the higumen of the monastery in what way he might give an example of good life to the brothers, and the brothers he taught to be obedient to the higumen for Jesus Christ's sake. Then, taking with him some of the brothers whom he knew to be worthy to be bishops, he sent word to his brother and started himself with these to the Serbian country. Stephen sent to meet him his bishops and his nobles and his sons (for he himself was sick), and so with great honour came the

holy Sava to his sick brother, the autocrat, whom he healed with prayers and the sprinkling of holy water. Then he went to Studenitza, the Serbian Lavra, and prayed in this holy church, kissing the tomb of his father, and came afterward to Zicha, the seat of the Serbian archbishopric. Hither, as the feast of the Ascension of the Lord drew near, he called to him his brother the autocrat, his nobles and clergy and a great multitude of the people, and spoke thus: "It is known unto you all how that in the beginning I fled into the desert, how I came again but once to see you and then departed, because I despised all the beauty of this world for the sake of the love of the Lord. And now once more am I come to you, my own people, because I have at heart the salvation of your souls. If you are obedient unto us, who have taught you in the Lord, and if you keep the commandments of the Lord, you will receive your reward. Now I have somewhat to say to all you who hear me. Behold how the Lord God, through the prayers of our holy father Simeon, has multiplied and increased you a thousandfold, and has made many of you princes and voievodes.<sup>1</sup> But it is not meet that he who rules you in the Lord with the glory of power should be yet of one title with you. And now also I have been placed for your sake as chief in the Church with the power of the priesthood. Wherefore it is the more necessary to adorn him who rules you in the Lord with the crown of kingship, for that will be an honour and a glory to you also." When they all heard this, they bowed themselves before the Lord and praised His chief shepherd. And so, during the Divine Liturgy in the time of consecration set apart for that purpose, St. Sava called the prince Stephen to the altar, read over him the prayer of blessing, anointed him with the holy chrism, put on him the kingly purple,

<sup>1</sup> Voievode, a small chieftain or baron.

placed the crown upon his head, gave into his hand the sceptre of a king, and girded him with the king's sword, crying: "Long life to the first crowned King of Serbia, Stephen, autocrat!" Then again, the day after, the holy Sava began to preach in the church to his own people: "Brothers, my companions and children in the Lord, hear ye and give ear, for I speak for love's sake and the good of your souls." And beginning from the Resurrection he spoke to them of the history of our salvation, and expounded to them the holy sacraments and the creed, and all the people listened with glad hearts, saying, "As you tell and interpret, so we believe and confess, so we will observe and do, most holy father." And when he had ended the holy gospel in the Liturgy he caused the king to make oath and to recite the Orthodox creed in the hearing of all the people. So likewise did all the nobility, saying, "We acknowledge the canons of the Seven Holy Oecumenical Councils and the nine local synods which were held for the strengthening of the Orthodox faith. We honour the holy eikons and the Light-giving Cross. We confess the seven sacraments of the New Testament. We believe that in the bread and wine we are partakers of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. We honour and bow to the holy relics, and we do all believe and confess what is in the Holy Gospels given by God, all things as they are ordered by the holy apostles and by the Fathers enjoined for our souls' salvation."

Now when the Hungarian king had heard that the Serbian state had a crowned king, which had none before, he was ill pleased because of this raising up of the autocrat Stephen, and full of pride and envy he declared war on him. Stephen, because he desired to avoid the shedding of blood on both sides for such a little matter, sent his brother the Archbishop Sava to



heal the breach and bring the Hungarian king to a more peaceful mind. So St. Sava went and was received with great honour. Then he began to speak unto the king in all gentleness concerning the Lord's words about peace and love and justice and truth. But he would not hearken to the meek words of holy Sava, but raging more furiously, threatened war. Then the Lord did a wonderful thing at the prayers of his saint, for there came hail out of the clouds all round the tent in which the holy Sava stood. When the king saw this, he repented him of his anger and wicked intentions, and he said to the saint, "Blessed art thou of the Lord, most reverend father, and blessed is that day on which thou hast come to us, for thou hast enlightened our hearts. Go in peace with the Lord and be witness from me to thy brother of my peacefulness and affection." So once again St. Sava brought peace to his fatherland and his brother's state.

And it came to pass a short while after that King Stephen fell ill and besought the saint to come to him and make him monk. But St. Sava delayed until he should recover; while he delayed King Stephen died and nothing had been done in the matter of appointing some one to fill his place. When holy Sava heard this, he came quickly to that place and was grieved because he had not fulfilled his brother's will. Then he prayed very earnestly to the good Lord, and as he made the sign of the Cross upon the breast of the dead king he said, "Rise, brother, and speak with me." And the king awoke as from a dream, and being then made monk with the name Simon, he blessed his eldest son, Radoslav, and gave him authority to rule. And so he died.

After St. Sava had anointed and crowned Radoslav king, he departed to the Holy Place of Jerusalem, taking

with him many gifts. And when he came there he venerated first the tomb of the Lord and then the other holy places, presenting the gifts which he had brought. Afterwards he went to the Jordan to the monastery of St. Sava the Blessed. And the fathers of this monastery gave to him the staff of Sava the Blessed. For they told him that it had been handed down from the fathers of old that the founder of this monastery had commanded that this staff should be kept, and whensoever there should come from the West countries some one bearing the same name, who was the founder of a people, it should be given to him. Then he returned again to Jerusalem, where he besought the patriarch for some relics, and took his way again to his fatherland, visiting the Holy Mountain and Khilindar on his way.

When King Radoslav heard that the saint was coming back, he himself with his bishops and nobles went out to meet him and came with him to Studenitza, where St. Sava celebrated a requiem for his brother, the monk Simeon, and brought his body to Zicha. He rested a little then, and went through the Serbian country, strengthening his flock and teaching them.

Some time after it came to pass that King Radoslav for some reason was made monk, and his brother Vladislav was raised up to be king. This was not pleasing to St. Sava, but by the favour of the Lord he anointed and crowned him for the Serbian kingdom. And now that he saw his people in good estate, and the Church and kingdom also, he consecrated to be archbishop in his place his disciple Arseni, and went again to the East, to Jerusalem and the Holy Places, and so to Alexandria and the deserts of Libya and the Thebaid, where he visited the monks of the desert. From thence he passed to Mount Sinai and venerated the relics of St. Katharine; and, after that, he went to Antioch, to the seat of one

of the first four patriarchates. Once more he went to Jerusalem, and from there, through Constantinople, he came to the town of Turnovo, to his kinsman Asen, the Bulgarian king, whose daughter had married Vladislav the king of the Serbian country. Asen rejoiced greatly at the coming of the saint and received him in his palace, where, since it was winter, he had all things made warm for him.

Now the feast of the Holy Epiphany drew near, and the king and the Bulgarian patriarch besought St. Sava during the service on the evening before the feast to celebrate the holy Liturgy on the next morning and to bless the waters, which was the duty of the patriarch on that day. After the feast the saint fell ill, and perceiving that his end was near, he called his disciples to him and gave them the holy relics to carry to the king and the archbishop, Arseni. He himself, after some days of prayer, received the Holy Sacrament, and at midnight, with these last words, "Glory be to the Lord for all His goodness," he gave up his soul, in the year 1236. The patriarch washed the body himself, and clothed him in splendid vestments, and buried him on the fourteenth day of January in the royal monastery of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste. His marble tomb he adorned with candles and with lamps.

Some time after King Vladislav came with his nobles to the town Turnovo, and Archbishop Arseni, with his bishops and clergy, took the body of St. Sava and brought it to the Serbian monastery Mileshevo, which King Vladislav had built; and there his bones rested in peace till the twenty-ninth day of April in the year 1595, when Sinan Pasha oppressed our people, and, stretching forth his sacrilegious Turk's hands he took the sarcophagus with its relics and bore them to the field Vratchar near Belgrade, where he burnt them, thinking thus to destroy

the glory and the memory of St. Sava. But the name of that saint will always be held in highest honour.

Through his prayers do Thou, Jesus Christ our Lord, grant us to live in peace, doing Thy Holy Will.  
Amen

## THE LIFE OF OUR HOLY FATHER ARSENI, SERBIAN ARCHBISHOP

THE year and the place in which this great man of our Church was born are not known to us, for he appeared in our fatherland when he was already full grown. Only one thing is certain, that he was the son of good parents, and that Sirmie was their country, where to this day Orthodox Serbians live. This saint, feeling in his heart a secret longing for the spiritual life and rule, and choosing the eternal rather than the transitory, the godly rather than the vain, desired to climb by the ladder of the spiritual exercises and the Gospel virtues. Wherefore, with warm prayers he prepared himself for the service of the Lord God and His Church, and going to the monastery, was made monk. When he heard tell of the holy Sava, the first Serbian archbishop, how he enlightened the Serbian country with his teaching and baptism, instructed the faithful in patience and repentance, and ministered forgiveness of their sins, he himself also, enlightened with grace, came to him as on wings. For he desired to be near the man of God, who was as an apostle, and learn how he might rise from earthly to heavenly things, from corruption to incorruption, from the things of men to the things of God. So when he came to the monastery Zicha, where was the archbishop's throne of St. Sava, he begged some of the brothers to tell the saint, and he was received lovingly by that renowned man.

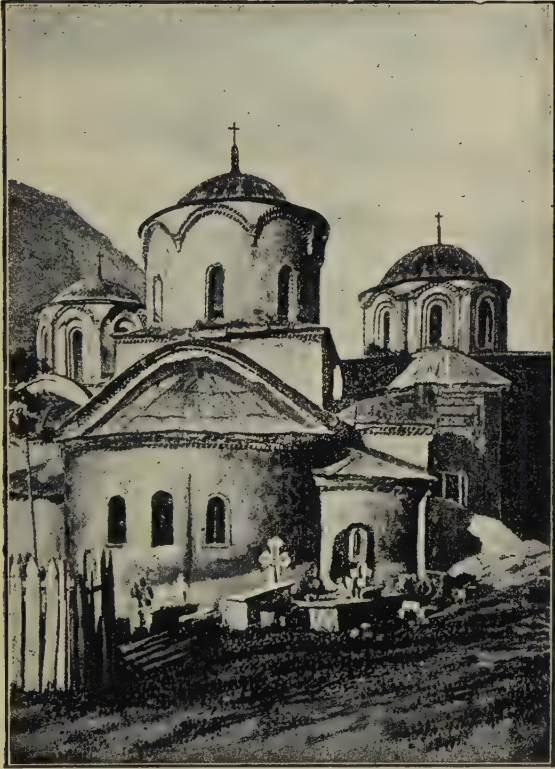
To him, desiring the divine love and wisdom, a wide field was opened out—help, O Lord, the teacher who attempts the spiritual exercises—and the young disciple did not shrink from work, but he rendered glad obedience to “the yoke that is easy,” overcoming its manifold temptations one by one with full obedience and sacrifice.

When he had spent long time in these spiritual exercises with gladness and constancy and had increased in spiritual stature, the saint made him ecclesiarch<sup>1</sup> in the Church of the Ascension of our Saviour. At this appointment to the service of the Church Arseni was greatly rejoiced, for he saw in it a sign of the favour of the archbishop and the fatherly love of his great teacher. He increased more and more in zeal, praying secretly to Jesus the Lord, who gave him grace, and he confessed to Him his weakness, beseeching Him to give him counsel, to strengthen him for His service, and to lead him by His Holy Spirit to do the work that was given him to do. Through such prayers he grew strong in hope and the grace of the Holy Ghost and the fear of God : for many years he carried out his duties as ecclesiarch in a godly way, living a good life with humility and purity of soul. When Archbishop Sava saw this he made him higumen of the glorious monastery of Zicha, giving into his charge all the buildings within the church and without. This was done before the first voyage of St. Sava to Jerusalem, to the end that while he was away the good rule of the holy house might not slacken.

When St. Sava returned from the Holy Places to his monastery he found all things ruled aright and in good condition, so that he was very glad. Now at this time their Hungarian neighbour, who was ever greedy for the plunder of foreign lands, had taken possession of some

<sup>1</sup> A kind of “precentor.” This church was at Zicha.





THE MONASTERY OF PECH .



part of the Serbian land near the border by force of arms, through his repeated invasions of that country. St. Sava, therefore, though he hoped that the Hungarian attacks would be some time beaten off and the uninvited guest sent back to his own country, determined to be ready for any future chance, and ordered the higumen Arseni to go a little into the Serbian country to the south and find another safe place where the Serbian archbishopric might be set up. Arseni, obedient as ever to his lord, went where he was bidden and after looking at many different places, chose out one in the country of Hvostom, which was afterwards called Metohia. And there, at the foot of the mountains, amid the rocks and caves, he signified that the church should be built, with the cells which it would need, and returning told the saint of the good place he had found. Then the holy archbishop gave orders for the building of the church of the holy Princes of the Apostles, Peter and Paul. The new monastery was called Pech, after the peshcher (caves) in that place, and the rocks on the east side of the church, and afterwards it became the Serbian patriarchal see during the reign of Stephen Dushan, the Serbian tsar.

And now that the holy Sava had been passing to and fro through his dioceses with great zeal for many years, teaching all men great and small, and now that he could give glory to God because He had made for his country an archbishop, bishops, monks and voievodes, and praise Him for that He had adorned his fatherland with great catholic churches, with worthy monasteries well ruled and governed, he thought to lay aside the archbishop's authority and to end his life in a strange land, for he desired not the praise of men. Wherefore he determined to go a second time on pilgrimage, and he called to him and consecrated in his place the higumen Arseni, because he knew him for a godly man who lived in the

fear of the Lord and kept His commandments, a just man and thinking no evil. So he laid all his authority on the holy Arseni in the monastery Zicha. He celebrated the Liturgy, and called him to be his successor before all the bishops and in the presence of King Vladislav himself.

To the honour of St. Arseni it must be told that he at first refused, holding himself not worthy of such a dignity, nor strong enough to bear such a burden with which were united such great and difficult duties. But this profession of unworthiness was only a sign of his great meekness; and when St. Sava insisted he finally gave his consent and took the throne of the archbishop of the Serbian country. When all this was so well ended, St. Sava started on his long journey, and St. Arseni remained to rule that Church and vineyard of the Lord to which he had been appointed. The spiritual arm fell on no one oppressively, but lightly and justly. He was never remiss in doing good and giving alms, but followed the example of his great and blessed predecessor in both these duties. He both instructed the people in sermons and corrected them by his God-like life. Good customs he introduced and preserved: bad customs he rooted up by his sanctity and patience. Sinners he called to repentance and newness of life, chastening them with good counsel, and praying for them that they might return out of their evil ways. The lost and those who had given heart and mind to other things he corrected with the words of truth and strong meat of the Gospels, giving himself no rest till they had come back to the wisdom of righteousness with full consent.

While St. Arseni was engaged upon these labours in the Church of the Living God, there came to him the embassy of the blessed Sava from Turnovo, the capital of the Bulgarian state, bringing with them letters from

the saint and gifts from the Serbian churches, but also the sad tidings that St. Sava was hardly yet alive in that town. Other messengers arrived a short while after, bearing the news of the short illness and death of the saint. Then all the Serbian land mourned for him. Behold how the Lord fulfilled the desire of St. Sava to die in a strange land! When the next year came the body of the saint still lay in Turnovo, and the honoured and blessed Archbishop Arseni went unto the godly King Vladislav and spoke thus: "It is not right in the eyes of God or man to leave our father, whom Jesus gave to us—that apostle and teacher who toiled and laboured so well, adorning the Serbian country with churches and a crowned king, with an archbishop and bishops, and with all the rules and canon law of Orthodoxy—to leave the body of that father outside the frontiers of his fatherland and throne. I beseech thee, make it thy care to have his relics brought back hither to his fatherland." This petition was very pleasing to King Vladislav, and he wrote once and twice to his wife's father the Bulgarian tsar, Asen, demanding from him the body of his uncle. To his first letter the tsar made answer: "If the body of St. Sava lay here unhonoured and uncared for, you would have cause to make this request. But since it lies in peace and is kept safe among us as surely as though it lay with you, why trouble ye the saint and yourselves?" To the second letter he made answer: "Since it pleased the Lord that the saint should die here, trusting in Christ, who am I to oppose the will of the Lord and to shake the tomb and relics of holy Sava, who left no testamentary direction about any such change? In vain you ask this of me, for I cannot grant it. Seek not to obtain it by force, for the patriarch and the nobles and all the city will be opposed to you." But King Vladislav could no

longer bear the reproaches of his people; and he feared lest he should grieve the Lord if the body of St. Sava remained in a strange country. So he took the road himself, many of his nobles, bishops and higumens bearing him company, and the Bulgarian king yielded, and gave up the body of his uncle. Vladislav bade his men set to work with all speed lest the Bulgarian tsar should change his mind—which indeed came to pass. But it was then too late, for the remains of holy Sava were brought away without mischance by our people, so that when Vladislav came up to them on the road he rejoiced greatly. Now, as they drew near the Serbian territory there came to meet the holy remains the Archbishop Arseni with his whole synod and many of the nobles, and did reverence as was meet to the holy relics, and kissed them, and brought them with singing of psalms and hymns to the monastery Mileshevo, which King Vladislav had built. And there in the great Church of the Ascension of our Lord the sarcophagus was placed in a worthy tomb which Vladislav had himself made ready.

The saint, Arseni, performed all the rites in memory of his teacher and benefactor never to be forgotten, and then went back to Zicha. But stricken in years and enfeebled by sorrow for holy Sava who lay dead in the Lord, he knew well that his own hour drew near. Wherefore, while he still had the strength, he raised up in his place Sava II to be archbishop of the Serbian land. Bent and shrunk by a long and weary illness he received the Holy Sacrament and gave up his soul to God on the twenty-eighth day of October, and was buried in the Pech Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, after ruling the Serbian country for thirty years.

Through his prayers, grant us, Christ Jesus, to come with peaceful soul and pure conscience to the quiet refuge of Thy Kingdom. Amen.



## THE LIFE OF SAINT SIMON PRVOVENCHANI, SON OF STEPHEN NEMANYA<sup>1</sup>

ST. SIMON was the son of the godly King Stephen Nemanya and the Princess Anna, and was given the name of Stephen in Holy Baptism—a good branch of a good root. He was the first-born of many brothers and sisters, gentle in his nature, of a loving heart and a spirit lit from God. When his father, zhupan of the Serbian people and first in dignity, was stricken in years and desired to lay aside the heavy burden of rule that he might end the days of his old age in prayer and spiritual exercises, in the presence of all the lords and nobles of all ranks, together with the bishops and the Holy Synod assembled, he called his eldest son Stephen before him, blessed him before them all, and gave into his hand the sceptre of rule. Then he spake to all the people assembled: “Behold, in the name of God, I raise up this my son to rule in my stead the state which was entrusted to me by God and by your love. Wherefore I bid you all to be obedient and faithful to him as you have been to me.”

When he came to the throne Stephen ruled by love, ever protecting those who were oppressed, feeding the poor, giving abundant alms to the aged and helpless,

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Prvovenchani (“first crowned”) became ruler of Serbia in 1196, when his father, Stephen Nemanya, abdicated and became the monk Simeon. In 1220 he was crowned king, thus destroying all traces of the suzerainty of the kings of Hungary and Greece. In 1227 he became monk with the name Simon, and died.

administering justice, treating his subjects as comrades, brothers and children, like one who knew that he must give account of his deeds at the Last Judgment. He watched over the Holy Orthodox Faith, cleansing it of all heresies. He built also churches, among which the most worthy of note is Zicha: in a word, he exercised all the Gospel virtues, following thus the Lord God who loves His chosen.

And it came to pass that there was brought from the Holy Mountain Athos a letter from his father, the monk Simeon, and his brother, the priest-monk Sava, in which they told him of their purpose to build a monastery which would be unlike all others, for it would be built "in the name of our family and of the Serbian people, who will in their prayers remember thee, and after thee thy sons and thy sons' sons for ever." The godly and Christian king and ruler of the Serbians rejoiced greatly because of this good purpose for his people and his country; and he sent to them much gold and silver, promising at the same time to give them all they needed for the monastery called Khilindar.

After a little time St. Sava wrote to him and told him concerning the death of their father, the saintly monk Simeon, and how, by the grace of the Lord, the body of this holy man gave forth healing oil, some of which he sent in a little bottle. When the zhupan his brother, Stephen, received the letter and the holy oil, he bowed himself to the ground and kissed the oil, giving thanks to the Lord for such a grace granted to his father's dust.

At this time, when there was peace and quietness in the Serbian state on every side, the Tempter of mankind stirred up Vukan, Prince of Zeta and Humlie, the younger brother of the zhupan Stephen, and put in his heart the desire not only to free himself from Stephen's

lordship over Zeta and Humlie, but to depose him from his throne and make himself ruler over all the country. The Christ-loving Stephen, seeing himself in danger from his younger brother and recoiling from the shedding of blood on either side, wrote to the godly Sava on Mount Athos, praying him on this wise: "O brother and my holy father, so dear to my heart and soul, hear the voice of my lamentation, incline thine ear unto my sighings and show us lovingkindness for the Lord's sake. When thou, my brother, and my father, didst depart from us, our country became foul with sin, civil war arose and blood was shed among a people of one race and faith. Very nearly was I taken prisoner, and because of our strife we are become a laughing-stock to those that are round about us. Wherefore I pray thee, O my father and brother, come quickly to our fatherland and bring with thee the body of our father, Simeon, that in some way, through thy holy prayers and thy presence in our midst, God may shine in His mercy upon us, our enemies be destroyed, and all that now is scattered may be made one again."

The godly saint Sava, anxious to raise up and comfort the sorrowing heart of his brother in this trouble, and at the same time to fulfil the dying behest of his father, came back to his fatherland bearing with him the relics. Then was discord turned into peace, sorrow into joy, and their feuds into brotherly concord. His brother Vukan was reconciled and brought to obedience; repenting of his lawless deeds, he prostrated himself and vowed a vow that he would never again rebel against the lordship of his elder brother. So was the love between them made greater than before, and peace and quietness reigned in Serbia: the power of the state was strengthened: its borders were enlarged; and the Orthodox Faith grew and flourished,

At this time there came to the zhupan Stephen one of the princes of Bulgaria, Strez by name, a kinsman of John, Tsar of Bulgaria and Zagorye, whose realm Boris had taken. Now Strez was brave and a little inclined to evil, so that Boris had feared lest he should be killed by him and his kingdom taken. That he might prevent this he had set himself to persecute him so as to make an end of him. When Strez perceived that his life was in danger, he had fled to the benign Stephen and besought his protection. The Christ-loving Stephen had received him and all that followed him with affection, treating him as a brother and giving him the town of Prosek, on the river Nardar, with the land about it, that he might rule over it. After a while, when Strez had grown rich, he became proud and began to oppress his subjects, so that at length, for little or no fault, he used to slay his people, hurling them from the tops of the high cliffs into the river below. Such were his pleasures : and afterward he would make himself drunk with wine. When tidings of these things came to Stephen he was very sorrowful and his conscience smote him because he had suffered such a man to be ruler. Therefore he wrote a letter to him, giving him counsel, and beseeching him to cease from his barbarous and cruel ways. But Strez not only paid no heed to this gentle and friendly counsel, not only did he refuse to turn aside from his evil ways, but he became ever more barbarous and full of treachery. He made a league with the Greek and the Bulgarian tsar ; and, receiving from the twain some armed forces, he made war on his benefactor. When the zhupan saw that he must resist this relentless foe, he first prostrated himself in prayer, saying : " Help me, O Lord : come, Lord, to my aid and strengthen me. Give me not over unto the will of mine adversaries, for the sake of the prayers of Thy Holy Mother and Thy servant my father Simeon.

Behold, Lord, my enemy who would render me evil for good." This he prayed with much else, and then gave orders to the commanders of his armies to make ready the soldiers for battle. But in the providence of God and by the mediation of the holy father Sava, Strez was brought to destruction before the battle. For he was seized by a strange fear which came on him from Heaven, and lifted up his hand against himself, piercing himself with his own dagger. When the leaders of his army saw this, some fled away homewards, others did homage to the zhupan Stephen.

When his brother, the holy father Sava, after going to the Holy Mountain Athos, returned some time later as archbishop of the whole Serbian people, Stephen was sick and could not go forth to meet him. Then St. Sava came to him and sprinkled him with holy water, and with his prayers raised him from the bed and healed him. With a twofold joy Stephen rejoiced, because his brother had come and because he had healed him. He praised the Lord with a loud voice, and falling at the feet of the archbishop, his brother, he poured forth his thankfulness from a full heart: and he gave great alms to the poor for his healing.

It came to pass after this that the king went to the monastery of Zicha to his brother the Archbishop Sava, with all his lords and nobles. It was the season of the Feast of the Ascension. The archbishop, while he celebrated the Holy Liturgy, called the prince, Stephen, to him at the altar and blessed him, and anointed him with the holy oil and dressed him in the royal purple. After that, he put a crown upon his head, girded him with the kingly sword, gave into his hand the sceptre of royal power, and sang, "Long live the King!" On the morrow all came again to the church, and after the reading of the Gospel the archbishop began to recite

the creed of the Orthodox Faith and bade the king and all the assembly to repeat it with him. Which thing they did. Now all this came to pass in the year 1222.

When the Hungarian king heard that Stephen had been crowned king without his consent, he was envious of this glory and sent an envoy to him to declare war. The peace-loving King Stephen, condemning in his heart a strife which could only bring harm to both sides and wishing to prevent the bloodshed, besought his brother, the Archbishop Sava, to turn the King of Hungary from his sinful purpose. This he brought about by his wisdom and by the help of the Lord.

Not long after King Stephen fell ill and prayed his brother, St. Sava, to make him monk. But St. Sava would not, saying to him, "In due time will I do this thing." When St. Sava had gone back to Zicha, the king fell ill again—so ill that he scarce breathed. A second time he called upon his brother to make him monk before he died. St. Sava made haste to come to the sick man, but he did not reach him before he died. Thus he had died without having received the monk's habit and without settling who should succeed him on the throne. After he had breathed his last breath, came St. Sava : kneeling down he prayed to God that the soul which had left the body might return. After his prayer he made the sign of the cross upon the breast of the dead, saying, "Arise, brother, and speak with me." Then did the dead arise as from a dream. He opened his eyes, and seeing the saint before him, took his hand and kissed it. The saint raised him up and made him be seated, and straightway made him monk, giving him the name Simon. Then did the monk Simon receive the Holy Sacrament and gave up his spirit to the Lord with the words, "Glory be to God for all things," in the year of Our Lord 1224. His dead body was brought



to Studenitza and there buried with honour in a marble tomb close to his father.

Some time after the holy Sava removed the remains to Zicha, whence, during the reign of Vladislav, they were brought again to Studenitza. When Urosh the First built the monastery Sopochani they carried the relics of this godly man to that glorious church, where they rested one hundred and fifty-two years, that is, till the fall of the Serbian kingdom under Lazar. After the death of his son, Stephen the Tall, they hid the sarcophagus with the relics of the godly man to keep them from the sacrilegious hands of the Turks, and so they continued for the space of two hundred and eleven years, no living man knowing of the place of their rest. In the year of Christ 1629 the godly man appeared thrice in a dream to the higumen of the monastery of Sopochani, bidding him to take him up from the darkness of the earth. A little while after he appeared also to the Serbian Patriarch, Paisi, and likewise to the Metropolitan of Rascia, bidding the latter to come to the fortress of Jeletch. And when he had so done, he met there the Patriarch Paisi, whereupon they set out together for the monastery Sopochani. At the end of the Holy Liturgy they went out in their vestments to the place shown to them in their dreams, and the patriarch ordered men to dig. And when they had made an end, they took the sarcophagus and placed the relics in the church of Sopochani with great rejoicing.

In the year 1686 the monks of Sopochani, in fear of the Turks, removed the sarcophagus to Montenegro and placed it in the church of the Holy Archangel, which is in the mountains ; and there it remained fourteen years. After which, in the year 1701, they were again removed to Studenitza and remained there till 1719. In that year, war was declared against the Turks by the empires

of Russia and Austria; and since the Turks, who wrought such evil upon the Orthodox and Serbian lands, began to burn the holy churches to the earth, the sarcophagus was taken by the monks to Kraljevo first, in the days of the Epiphany—whence it was borne to Jagodina, arriving there on the seventeenth day of January. From Jagodina to Gradska it was carried overland, and from Gradska to Belgrade by water. From Belgrade there came out to meet the relics of the saint, the metropolitan of the city, Dionysius, with all his clergy and much people. He brought them into the church, and there they rested from the first day of February to the eighteenth day of September. When peace was made between the peoples at war, and Serbia was left to the mercy (and lack of mercy) of the Turks, it was determined that some place which was free from danger must be sought for the sarcophagus, and so it came about that it was taken by water on the Danube to the monastery of Voylovitza, near Panchevo, in the Banat. From there it was brought back on the first day of December in the year 1791, to Rajinovatz, near Gradska, and from there again to Studenitza, whither it came on the nineteenth day of February of the following year.

But these relics, so sacred to the nation, were not destined to rest in peace, for even now there came no respite from movement. In 1804 Serbia arose in armed revolt under her leader Karageorge Petrovich against the hateful cruelties of the most accursed of the Turkish “dachilas” (rulers) in Belgrade. Although the rising of our warriors was successful, nevertheless in the space of ten years the Turks, ever enemies of the Orthodox Faith, came many times to Studenitza with fire and sword and pillage. Wherefore the monks of the monastery, foreseeing what would happen, were at pains to find in good time a fitting place for the

sarcophagus of this godly man, and came in the year 1805 to the monastery of Vrachevshnitza. But here also was there no quiet refuge for the relics of the holy Simon : for after eight years, when our strength passed from us through jealousies and disputes among ourselves, the victorious Turks came with fire and sword upon men, villages and churches. And so the monks brought the sarcophagus away and carried it across the river Sava, on the twenty-first day of October in the year 1813, at Semlin, a frontier town of Austria. And afterwards it was handed over to the monks of the monastery of Fenek, near to the river, where it remained till the June of the year following, when it was taken to the monastery of Beochin on the far side of Frushka Gora and there rested till December.

When there came a convenient season and peace prevailed in Serbia through the labours of Prince Milosh Obrenovich, then was the time to bear back the sarcophagus, and it was brought to the monastery of Kalenich (December 8, 1816). Later, on the twentieth day of August, 1839, it was removed to the convent of Studenitza, where to-day it rests in peace.<sup>1</sup> The relics have power to heal all who come to them with faith in this protector of our nation.

Through his prayers grant us, Lord Jesus Christ, pardon for our sins and life everlasting. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> During the retreat of the Serbian army before the Austrians and Bulgarians in 1915, the relics of St. Simon were dragged over the mountains of Albania and are now in Montenegro.

## THE LIFE OF THE THEOPHOROS STEPHEN MILUTIN, KING OF ALL SERBIA AND THE COASTLANDS

THIS Milutin Theophoros, great in virtue and abounding in mercy, was the younger son of the Serbian king, Urosh I (1242-1276) and Helen, and this Urosh was the third son of Stephen Prvovenchani, called as a monk Simon. Before he came to the throne he was called Milutin, a name he received in Holy Baptism, and after he became king he was named Milutin Stephen Urosh II—Stephen because of the first crowned king, his grandfather, Urosh from the name of his father; and since he lived righteously and his body after death was glorified by our Lord with incorruption, therefore he was called saint.

In his youth his teacher was the blessed Serbian archbishop Daniel, a holy and God-like man, very skilled in spiritual wisdom and the Holy Scriptures, who wrote and handed down for us the genealogy of the Serbian kings down to his own time. When we are mindful of the wisdom and experience of this great teacher, it is easy for us to judge of the disciple, of the qualities of his mind and heart and the way of his spirit. He was meek and gentle, merciful and just, peaceful and courteous. For these qualities all those historians of other lands, who have written the story of the Serbian state, praise him. So Milutin was beloved of all men, both his own people and strangers.

His own brother, Dragutin, from the same mother,



ST. MILUTIN





Helen, showed great promise, and his parents were careful for him, bringing him up lovingly in the good Faith, in the fear of the Lord, in purity and every virtue. When he grew up it was the desire of the parents that he should marry, and they took for him to be his wife the girl Katharine, daughter of the Hungarian king, Vladislav. Before the marriage took place, King Urosh promised before his death to give the throne to this son Dragutin. Thus he made oath to the Hungarian king, saying, "I will that you give your daughter to my son Dragutin, whom I will name Autocrat and King of all Serbia and the coastlands before the time of my far voyage to my father." With this condition the marriage came to pass, and Dragutin with his wife, and afterwards his children, lived in the court of his parents, waiting to receive that which had been promised to him.

When the younger son, Milutin, was of an age, his parents desired him to be married also. Now Michael Palæologus, the Greek emperor, knowing that the Serbian King Urosh had a son unmarried, and being in great trouble through the Crusaders who had driven him from Constantinople, hoped to obtain the help of the Serbian army by means of a marriage. Wherefore he sent his youngest daughter, Anna, with the Patriarch and a great company of his court, with the proposal that they should take the imperial child as betrothed. But Urosh the king considered the condition of affairs at that time cunningly, and preferred the peace which was so great a benefit to his state to an emperor who should be his kinsman; so the embassy, with the child, returned with nothing accomplished. Milutin remained unmarried for six years longer and then took to wife Elizabeth the daughter of the Hungarian king, Andrew III, and she bore to him one son, Stephen, afterwards called Dechanski.

While King Urosh was ruling Serbia and the coastlands in peace and with justice, he built a splendid church in the name of the All Holy Trinity at Sopochani. But about this time there rose against him his eldest son Dragutin, demanding that he should fulfil the promise he had made. And when his father would not yield to him the throne, Dragutin obtained an army from his wife's father and made war against Urosh, joining battle with him at a place called Gatsko, in Herzegovina. Alas! the son was victorious and took his father's throne by force and shut him up in prison at Durazzo, where he died, in the year 1282, after reigning on the Serbian throne for thirty-five years. His body was brought back and buried in the church of the Holy Trinity, which he built in Sopochani. His wife Helen lived for many years after on the land which Dragutin gave her for her support. When she was very old she was made a nun in Skadar, and not many days after she became very ill and died in the Lord at her palace in Brnyatzi. The godly fathers brought her body to the monastery at Gradatz in the presence of the archbishop, Sava II, and her son Milutin, who alone, with the archbishop and some of the clergy, placed the sarcophagus in the tomb they had made ready.

But the robber of the father's throne, who had rendered to his father evil for good, was not blessed with a long reign, because he had raised his hand against his father, breaking the word of the Lord, and had spurned that union blessed by nature and by God. Wherefore the All Great and Just Judge of all mankind, who rewardeth all the evil of sinful men here on earth, took his body that He might perchance make his proud heart somewhat less evil and bring him to repentance. For he fell from horseback near the fortress of Jeletch and broke his leg, whereby he suffered great agony.

This slight punishment was for him the beginning of a sickness of heart and soul which day by day gave him no ease, his conscience being pricked. When he understood this he said in his heart, "Now do I perceive, O my Lord, that Thou art just and that only what is just maketh for good. I have trespassed, Lord : I pray Thee cleanse me. I am a sinner : do Thou pardon me. I have not followed the commandments of Thy law : for Thou didst say, 'Whosoever doeth evil to his father or mother must die the death.' Sinner that I am, I have done this thing, raising my hand against my father, and for this I perish. All that has come upon me is just." Thus overwhelmed by the pangs of conscience and suffering always in body, he handed over the Serbian kingdom to his brother Milutin, keeping only for himself Sirmie and Machva, which countries he had received for dowry with the daughter of the Hungarian king. At first he went to live at Machva, and later he moved to Sirmie. Some time he was obedient to King Milutin, but afterwards his thoughts changed and he made ready once more to take the throne of his brother. Yet, through the prayers of Archbishop Daniel, he gave way and made peace with his brother. But he had showed once more his rebellious nature. Finally, when he saw that the days of his life were numbered, he asked that he might be made monk ; his prayer being granted, he received the name Theoktist. Not many days after he died, on Friday in the third week of Lent, the twenty-first day of March in the year 1317, and his body was brought to the monastery of the great and holy martyr, St. George, in Machva, and there buried. It was this Dragutin who built the monastery of Racha, near the river Drina, and his wife built the monastery of Tronasha, on the slope of Mount Gouchevo.

Stephen Milutin Uroch II ruled as king and autocrat

from the year 1285, and took as his second wife the daughter of the Greek Emperor Andronicus, Simonide, who bore to him a son, Constantine. He chose Prizren for his capital. His first war he waged with Michael Palæologus, who wanted to repay the insult he had received when his daughter Anna, whom he had sent to be the wife of Milutin yet unmarried, had been returned to him. The godly king, forced to defend his kingdom with the sword, offerered up this prayer before joining battle: "O Lord, I know that Thou art quick to show pity and rich in grace. Therefore I humbly trust in Thee, because Thou didst help our fathers when they hoped in Thee, and Thou didst deliver them, To Thee they cried and Thou didst keep them. They trusted in Thee and were not put to confusion. My Lord Jesus look upon me, Thy sinful servant, and upon the land which Thou hast given me; preserve me from those who would trouble me and let them not say in their pride, 'We have slain them, and their memory is utterly perished!'"

Strong in his hope in the Lord, he went forward with his army and destroyed his enemies so utterly that he took Palog, Skoplye, Ovchepole, Zlatovo, Pijachatse, Strumnitza, Seres, Debar, Kichevo and Porach. Then the Emperor Michael took to himself Tartars, Turks and Franks, and came once more against the godly Milutin, but he died suddenly before he had come to the Serbian land. Though the mercenaries, these Tartars, Turks and Franks, still desired to invade the Serbian country for plunder, they were utterly destroyed by the help of the Lord.

And a short while after there rose up against the godly King Milutin, Shishman, a prince of the Bulgarian king Smilatz, who lived in the town Widin on the river Danube, and invaded with his army Hvoctno, not far

distant from the Petch patriarchate. But he was vanquished and forced to flee away, so utterly overwhelmed that he was disgraced. When Shishman found himself in such straits, he humbled himself and besought the godly King Milutin to be merciful to him. Then his country was given back to him, and, moreover, he received the daughter of King Milutin, Nada, to be the wife of his son Michael, who became in time the Bulgarian tzar.

After these things which happened with Shishman, Milutin found his greatest foe in Nogie, chief of the Tartars, who now ruled by force of arms the Bulgarian country, and was threatening war against our fatherland. King Milutin, having no hope of overcoming this proud pagan by the power of the sword, made a treaty with him, and to make it sure sent as hostage his son Stephen, who stayed some long while among the Tartars and afterwards happily returned safe. When the Persians came with the Turks against Rumania, plundering the Christians and causing great distress in Constantinople, Milutin besought his father-in-law the Emperor Andronicus to come and help him with his army and to drive the barbarians from his country. After this he made an abiding peace with the Emperor Andronicus and with the Bulgarian king.

So when his state lay at peace on all sides, Christ-loving Stephen Milutin began to build churches and monasteries with the riches which the Lord gave to him. First he pulled down the church at Khilindar to its foundations and built it greater and adorned it, and made for it cells like an emperor's palace and strengthened it with towers against the enemy. After this he began to help the sick. He built a church and a hospital in Constantinople in the place called Prodrom. And for the rooms of it he gave soft beds for the sick,

and provided both doctors and nurses. Likewise in Jerusalem he built a church to the Spirit Powers (the angels). In Salonika he built two churches, to St. Nicholas and to St. George, giving them many splendid palaces. He often sent rich alms to the monastery in Mount Sinai. All these good deeds he did in strange lands. But in the same way and with greater zeal he was a benefactor to the Church of his fatherland also. Thus in Treskavatz he built the church of the Mother of God and gave it gold and silver vessels ; in the country of Kuchi he gave the church of the great and holy martyr St. George, together with its costly vessels ; in his capital, Prizren, the church of the Falling Asleep of the Mother of God, and many hospitals ; on the river Grachanitza the church of the Annunciation, with six towers ; in Skoplye three churches, to the Mother of God, to the apostolic Emperor Constantine, and to the great and holy martyr St. George ; in Rascia the church at Banyska, where the hot springs are, to the glory and memory of the first martyr and archdeacon St. Stephen ; in Sofia the church to the Holy Wisdom, after the manner of the church in Constantinople which Justinian built, from which church the town Shredatz received its name Sofia ; in Studenitza the church of the holy and just Joachim and Anna : and in Orohovitza, in the country of Dabar, the church to the great martyr George. They say that this God-loving king made an oath to the Lord that for every year he remained on the throne he would build a church to the Lord. And the All Merciful Lord granted him forty and two years as ruler of Serbia, and he built forty and two churches.

Now the sees of the bishops in his time were as follows : Zeta, Raschia, Hum, Hvostom, Zvechany, Toplitza, Prizren, Budimlye, Liplanye, Skoplye, Dabar,



Morava, Branitchevo, Machva, Kontule and Gradatz, And the chief monasteries were : Studenitza, Mileshevo. Sopochany, Banya, Gradatz, Rascia, Kontule, Hvostom, Gostiva, Orahvitza, Nagorichany, and Skoplye. The archbishop of this time was Sava III, and afterwards Nikodim, who, after fasting at Holy Mountain Athos, came back to Serbia and was called to be archbishop by the counsel and consent of the king, and was consecrated on the feast of the Ascension of Our Lord. After his death, Daniel, the Serbian chronicler, was archbishop. While all things were thus ordered and the king was engaged upon these works, dear to God and of good service for the Church of Christ and the spiritual training of her children, in the midst of the deep peace at home and abroad, there came up black clouds threatening a tempest. For the first-born son <sup>1</sup> of the saintly and godly King Milutin, Stephen, after living long time in Zeta with his wife, was led away by the words of the nobles who served him and determined to demand the throne of his father before the lawful time. When his father would have none of this, the ungrateful son began to entice the nobles from his father's side and to prepare for rebellion. When King Milutin of the godly soul, to whom the peace of the spirit was needful, saw how subtly he undermined the throne, he called his first-born son to him and prayed him with gentle words not to raise his hand against his father but to wait the time which is provided by the Lord. These good words of the father were little to the mind of the foolish son, who being determined to abide by the advice of his nobles, was the more enraged and went away to prepare for war. And when it was no longer possible to keep from civil war—war between father and son, alas !—King Milutin came with his army

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Dechanski. Compare with this account, pp. 57-58.

to Zeta against his rebel son and battle was joined and the vanquished son fled to the farther bank of the river Boyana. He could not escape, however, but was captured, and by order of his father was sent as a prisoner to his father-in-law at Constantinople, the Emperor Andronicus. The guard which took him from Skoplye put out his eyes as they passed through Ovchepole, and so brought him blind to the place appointed.

When this trouble was passed, Milutin, now stricken in years and perceiving that his passage from this transitory life drew near, gave alms to the poor, and falling ill soon after, became weaker very rapidly in his palace of Narodine. And because his sickness was unto death the blessed and godly king prepared himself for everlasting life, purifying his conscience by confession and repentance, strengthening his soul with faith and receiving the Holy Sacrament. With the burden on his soul thus lightened he opened his mouth and spake to those he loved: "My beloved children, you know that the hour of my passing from you is near. Weep not, but praise the Lord with me, that I may receive the lot prepared for the holy." So died in the Lord this Christ-loving king on the thirtieth day of October. The body of the godly man was brought from Narodine to the church of the holy first martyr and archdeacon Stephen at Banya, and there, when all the rites were performed, it was buried in a tomb in accordance with his wish.

Some of the people also say that the blessed king desired that his body should be buried in the church at Sofia, which is Shredatz, but his nobles would not consent to this, so the remains were brought to Skoplye and there buried in the church of the Falling Asleep of the Mother of God. After three years the Lord glorified the body of his saint with incorruption, and his son Stephen

Dechanski, with the archbishops, brought the holy relics to Shredatz and placed them in the church of Holy Wisdom.

Through his prayers, Lord Jesus, grant to Thy people to live in peace, doing Thy holy will. Amen.

## THE LIFE OF THE SAINT AND GREAT MARTYR, STEPHEN DECHANSKI<sup>1</sup>

FROM the life of the saintly and blessed Milutin we know that Stephen Dechanski, the Serbian Job, was the first-born son of Milutin and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of the Hungarian king. He passed the years of his youth at the court of his parents in the study of his own language and the writings of his people and being instructed in the Holy Scriptures. His mind, enlarged by study, he grew strong in the Orthodox Faith, which preserved his soul from terrible heresy and led him straight towards everlasting life with Our Saviour Jesus Christ. For no mortal man can tell what temptations the chances of life will bring to him one day ; nor is it possible to find a better medicine to fight against these than the doctrine of the Spirit, Who speaks in the Word of the Lord. Therefore the saint was zealous to strengthen his heart, by the teachings of that Holy Spirit Who gives understanding to those who are obedient to Him.

The fruit of this doctrine and training soon showed itself, for when the needs of the state required peace with Nogyi, chief of the Tartars, and that man demanded from King Milutin his son as hostage, the young Stephen, heir to the throne, went willingly, though it was clear that his way was full of danger. Being obedient, therefore, to his father's will, he was willing to go, giving himself heart and

<sup>1</sup> King of Serbia, 1321-1331.

and soul to the Lord, who looks upon His people. And his hope was not vain ; for after some years he made friends with one of the Tartar nobles, Enirizaki, who sent him and his companions to a place whence he could come back safely to his father. When the king saw him come back safe and sound, he gave thanks to the Lord, saying : " This my son is saved from the hands of sinners by the right hand of the Lord Most High."

After a short time his parents made a marriage for him with the daughter of the Bulgarian king Smilatz, and his father gave him as his portion a good part of the state, namely the country of Zeta, where the first-born and heir to the throne long time lived with his nobles. But when, through the marriage of King Milutin to Simonide, the son Constantine was born, Satan, quick to do evil, began to sow discord concerning the inheritance of the Serbian throne. Stephen, the first-born, was worthy to come to the throne after the death of his father, but Simonide desired this good fortune for her son Constantine. This her purpose was no secret to Stephen, for she spoke evil against him openly and hated him, striving to anger his father against his eldest son, so that he might refuse him the throne. Now the nobles and the chief men were against her in this plot, for they feared lest, when Constantine came to the throne, the power of the Greeks should become over great in the Serbian country. While things were in this pass they say that the party which favoured Stephen gathered an army together and forced him to demand the throne of his father, for they desired to forestall the plot of the queen. But King Milutin vanquished his son with his army and took him as he fled, and gave orders that he be bound and blinded with red-hot irons, and sent him to Constantinople to be shut up in prison.

The commands of his father were carried out and Stephen was borne away by a guard, together with his children Dushan and Dushitzya. On the way, as they passed over Ovchepole, he was blinded with red-hot irons. In that same night there came to him St. Nicholas in a dream and said to him: "Be not afraid, for your eyes are in my hand"; and from that time Stephen felt no small lightening of his sickness. When he came to Constantinople he was received with mercy by the Emperor Andronicus, who took him at first into the imperial palace, giving to him all he stood in need of, and afterwards put him in the monastery Pantokrator. All these things, exile and imprisonment, blindness and captivity, though very bitter, the godly Stephen endured with patience, neither protesting nor repining, but praising the Lord who had given him such a wound. For this his meekness and patience the Emperor Andronicus loved him and went often to him, and was kind to him, because he perceived in him a man of great spirit.

Now in the fifth year of his captivity it chanced that the saint was in church on the feast of the saint and wonder-maker Nicholas. While he sat with the rest and listened to the reading of the life of the holy man of God, being very weary, he fell asleep: and behold, he saw again in a dream that godly man who had appeared to him on the way in Ovchepole, speaking to him on this wise: "That which was promised to thee before, thou shalt now receive. He who sent me to thee formerly with a promise, sends me again bearing this message, that thou shalt soon receive thy sight once more." By the will of the Holy Lord, so it came about and he began to see; yet he told no man of this mercy of the Lord, save the Emperor Andronicus, who counselled him that he should not appear with open eyes, lest the evil should happen to him again. Wherefore



Stephen wisely kept secret this opening of his eyes until the day when the Lord should will that he return and be made king.

At this time the Emperor Andronicus was hard pressed and asked help of Milutin against the Turks, who threatened his country. To his embassy he added the higumen of the monastery Pantokrator. When they came to Prizren, King Milutin called this godly higumen aside and questioned him concerning his son Stephen. He made answer wisely and said: "O king, you ask news of an unhappy man, a second Job. Know then that the lowliness of his heart sets him above the glory of men. And when you come to be of the same mind with me, thy intercessor, in this good work, take thy son Stephen back, who through his long suffering is made good and is without reproach." The story goes on thus: In the seventh year the prisoner, St. Stephen, yet bearing his difficult lot with patience, wrote a letter to the Holy Mountain to the godly Daniel, praying him on this wise: "Cause thy council of most reverent fathers of the Holy Mountain to make intercession for me to my lord and father, beseeching him that he be not enraged with me always, lest I die in this strange land." Now this reverend father, after taking counsel with the brethren, sent to Prizren some of the godly old men, giving them a letter for the honoured Archbishop Nikodim concerning this matter. And in good time these reverend fathers of the Holy Mountain came to the godly Milutin, being brought to him by the Archbishop Nikodim, and spoke softly with him. Then the heart of Milutin was softened, and because no long time since there had come the higumen from the monastery Pantokrator in Constantinople with this prayer, and now also these fathers brought to him the intercession of the council for mercy and the restoration of his son,

he yielded, and said to them: "Your prayer shall be granted. What you have asked for my son, shall be my will also." Then they gave him thanks and went their way.

So, after that, the godly King Milutin sent a messenger to his father-in-law, the Emperor Andronicus, asking him to release his son. At this message the emperor rejoiced greatly, and sent away the prisoner in peace, commanding the guard to give all honour to the king's son.

After many days' voyage came Stephen with great joy to the town of Prizren. When he came before his father with his son Dushano—for Dushitza had died in Constantinople—he knelt down with his eyes bound up and spoke thus: "Father, I confess my sin. I do not deny what thou knowest to be true. But I know also that thou art merciful, and I pray thee forgive me, thy son, and do not hate thy child." Then his father bowed down to him and kissed him and forgave him that which he had done for always. After this he gave to him a part of the country of Bodimlya for his support, whither Stephen went, leaving his son Stephen Dushan with his grandfather.

It came to pass after three years that his father, the godly King Milutin, died, and there came messengers to Stephen both to bring the sad tidings of the death of his father and to pray him to take the sceptre of the kingdom. He did not believe the words of these, for he feared some plot or crafty design. But when he knew the truth more perfectly he came before the nobles and the people assembled, and taking the bandage from his eyes he said: "Beloved brothers and comrades, hearken to me. Our Lord has had mercy upon me; for whereas you knew me blind, behold now I see. Praise all of you the great and merciful Lord with me." And all

the assembly, seeing with their eyes what they had heard with their ears, bowed low before their lawful king. When Stephen was thus raised to the throne, since he knew that his father, Stephen Urosh, was beloved of his people, he took for his own name also Urosh, and was called Stephen Urosh, which good name he proved by giving presents to the Holy Church and to the poorest of his subjects.

But Constantine, son of King Milutin and Simonide, plotted against the throne of his brother Stephen Urosh, and having obtained soldiers from the neighbouring peoples, he commanded him to leave the throne, saying that it was not meet that a blind beggar should rule the state. Stephen then, with soldiers of his own people, went first to Pech, the Serbian archbishop's seat; and there the holy Nikodim came to meet him and crowned him king of the Serbian state in the church. Thus, crowned head of the kingdom, he went to war. When the two armies met the holy King Stephen did not desire to join battle forthwith, but, full of love towards his brother and meekness of heart, he wrote a letter to Constantine in these words: "Stephen Urosh, by the grace of God king and heir to his father's dominions, being firmly purposed to rule his people in the fear of God, to his beloved brother Constantine, greetings and joy in the Lord. Put far from thee thy desire to come with a foreign people to make war on thine own countrymen; but let us meet one another, and thou shalt be second in my kingdom, for the land is great enough for me and thee to live. I am not Cain who slew his brother, but Joseph who loved him, and in his words I speak to thee. Fear not, for I am from the Lord. You prepared evil for me, but the Lord has given me good as you now see." When Constantine had read this letter he gave orders straightway that the Serbian

army be attacked. The battle was joined and the army of St. Stephen was victorious, and Constantine was not only defeated but himself slain.

No sooner had he made an end of this first rebel than a second arose, Vladislav, the first-born son of Dragutin. He demanded the throne by right of his father, but could not take it by force, for Stephen overcame him, and being driven out he went to Sirmie, and there died.

So when Stephen had set peace about his throne he began to do works good and pleasing to God. He gave alms to the poor, built churches, sent rich presents to the holy monasteries in Alexandria and Mount Sinai, in Jerusalem and Palestine, in the Holy Mountain and Thessaly and Constantinople. Especially he sent gifts to the monastery of Pantokrator in Constantinople, where he had been imprisoned seven years. For as he had obtained his freedom by the intervention of the clergy, so, as a token of his thanks, he greatly revered the bishops and priests. And because he knew that he was debtor to the holy wonder-maker Nicholas, he ordered a silver altar to be made, with eikons also, and gave it to the church of that saint in Bari. Afterwards he overcame the Hungarian and the Bulgarian kings and the Greek emperor, who were envious of the glory of King Stephen Urosh III, and rose against him to destroy the state. So by the help of the Lord the blessed king was victorious, and desired to repay his debt to the Lord God by building a splendid church in the midst of his fatherland. Wherefore he set forth with Archbishop Daniel, who had succeeded Nikodim, to seek a good place for this church. And they found it on the river Bistretza in the country of Hvostom, and himself with his own hand laid the first stone for the

foundation of the church in the name of the Lord God Almighty and in honour of the Ascension of the Lord, in the place called Dechany; wherefore the monastery was called Visoki Dechany (high Dechany). When the building was done the holy king adorned it within with gold and silver and all the vessels it needed most splendid.

Thus labouring in the Lord and minding to live the days of his old age in peace, he endured such a sorrow as he never thought to come to him. In these days he had set apart for quietness trouble came upon him, and he received a wound more terrible than his captivity in Constantinople, for he was utterly overwhelmed, forgotten of all his own, and fell from his throne in that very moment when he thought himself secure. It grieves the heart to hear tell of such things as came upon the saint in his great old age through no fault of his own.

Now his first-born son, Stephen Dushan, won great renown in battle against the Bulgarians and Greeks. By the love of his father he was called the younger king for his bravery, and he was given a country of his own. But yielding to the counsel of the nobles who followed him, he foolishly rose against his father to take from him the throne and the state by force, fearing lest his father should give it to the son of his second marriage. So then he rebelled against him, and the godly King Stephen took horse and fled with some few of his nobles to the town Petrich, not far from Narodimlya. There the soldiers of his son overtook him and surrounded the town and made him prisoner. Stephen Dushan, after taking counsel with his nobles, put him in prison in the glorious town of Zvechan, where he died an unnatural death in the year 1336. His holy body

was brought by his son Stephen Dushan to the monastery of Visoki Dechany, and there it rests in peace to this day in the church of God Almighty, to Whose care we commit ourselves, praying peace for ourselves and our fatherland and for our soul's salvation. Amen.



## THE LIFE OF THE HOLY AND BLESSED MARTYR, TSAR UROSH

THE only son of the first Serbian tsar, Stephen Dushan, was born in 1337, and was called in Holy Baptism Urosh. His mother was Helen, the daughter of John Kantakuzen, the Greek emperor. God gave him a fine heart and soul, and he was so well pleasing to his father, the great Dushan, that he was called while yet a youth to be Serbian king and heir presumptive of the tsar's throne. Tsar Stephen the Mighty, a man ever fortunate in war and conqueror of the country of the Greeks and Bulgarians, increased the Serbian state from the Danube to the Sea of Marmora, from the Adriatic to the Black Sea, and held beneath his sceptre these lands—Serbia, Bosnia, Dalmatia, Albania, Epirus, Thessaly, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Rumania. But the Almighty, to Whom it pertains to bestow the crown of lands, stayed him on his glorious path, and Dushan, who, according to the judgment of men had yet some years to live, fell ill of a sudden of a grievous sickness and soon after died in the year 1355.

When Urosh became tsar, by title the Fifth, he was no more than nineteen years of age. By his wisdom and gentleness he gave good promise on ascending the throne of his father, which seemed so strong. But he must needs have vigour and strength besides the qualities of a good ruler, if he was to hold in obedience the new countries of the Serbian state, which stretched from sea to sea. The rigour of his father, who had held

so many countries together by fear, the young tsar replaced with great gentleness, so that he weakened the tsar's power, which was founded upon force of arms. The nobles, when they buried his father, buried his memory with him, and since there was now no one to fear they took counsel together against the authority of the state and that they might overthrow the godly tsar. There were many signs of evil before he came to the throne: a terrible famine befell the tsardom, and many died; in the same year also there invaded Europe the Ottomon voievodes across the Dardanelle Straits, and after taking for themselves the most fertile of the country in the Greek Empire, they began to menace Serbia and Bulgaria. Then the imperial power of Tsar Urosh, thus already weakened, was shaken by his uncle Sinisha, ruler of Thessaly, who obtained an army from the Greeks and Albanians and rose in rebellion against his tsar, demanding the throne for himself by right of seniority. There was thus civil war. Sinisha, holding to his belief that he had a right to the throne, invaded Zeta with the purpose of taking Scutari, but in this he did not succeed, and he was forced to retire. It seems, however, that his own mother, the Tsarina Helen, was not blameless in this matter, and urged on the civil war, hoping to take for herself a fortified town. This we may know from the fact that when Nikifor, the "despot angel," rose against Urosh and took Thessaly, it was done with the consent of the tsarina mother, who had given him her sister to wife. The lesser rulers, meanwhile, seeing how matters lay, strengthened their hold on their own countries, and cast off the burden of subjection.

But the most dangerous of these rulers were Vukashin, despot of Hum, and Uglesha his brother. Vukashin held high office and was first in the kingdom after the tsar himself. But his pride was overweening and he

began to plot against the tsardom and Urosh. Those wise nobles who were loyal subjects of Urosh found no difficulty in discerning the secret purpose of Vukashin, and early gave good counsel to the tsar to save him from the plot of Vukashin, to wit, that he should take from him the estates he had entrusted to him as soon as might be so as to make him harmless. But the crafty Vukashin, foreseeing their plans against him, delayed not to approach the tsar himself and prepare his mind in advance against the plan of the wise nobles. In this way Urosh not only became the friend of Vukashin, but made him king and held him high in his esteem. So it came about that, either the tsar himself raised up to be king his future murderer, or that Vukashin himself obtained the kingly title by a plot. From that time all the nobles faithful to the tsar left him, and each man thought only how to strengthen himself in his own land. Thus in the space of ten years, during the lifetime of the Tsar Urosh, the Serbian empire was divided into four parts, independent one of another. Urosh himself bore only the name of tsar, for in truth the real tsar was Vukashin.

Now against this false tsar there rose up some of the nobles to dethrone him, or at least to take from him some of the power. In their number was the prince Lazar. This prince, with the help of the Hungarians, took Machva and other parts of Serbia. Tsar Urosh desired to make peace between them, but he was powerless, and was as a voice crying in the wilderness. The unhappy tsar, seeing himself without power, authority or subjects, and having no means of support, left his throne and went to live among some of the nobles who were friendly disposed. Some time he lay in this condition of poverty and misery not to be endured, save that, to the gentle heart of this long-suffering and blameless man, it was

endurable because the Lord was his support. He found himself a stranger in his own fatherland ; he, to whom rule belonged by right, was powerless ; the giver of alms was left himself at the mercy of his own nobles and subjects. The hospitality of Vukashin, to whom he came first, was full of bitterness and contempt and caused him great misery. No longer able to endure such things and hoping to find it somewhat easier, he left Vukashin and came to Lazar, ruler of Machva and Sirmie. But this change of place did not bring a change of lot. Lazar had no love for Vukashin because he had succeeded by his plot in deceiving the tsar when he came to the throne, and had taken his power and shaken and weakened the Serbian state, and then, in his greed for power, had dethroned God's anointed, Urosh, and changed the bearer of the crown into a slave. This hatred of Lazar for Vukashin knew no bounds, and so the wandering tsar fell a prey to the mercy of strangers and often suffered insult. Wherefore he left the house of Lazar and came back again to Vukashin. But when by this change his miserable lot was no better but rather grew worse, he thought to seek a refuge among the people of Ragusa for his gentle soul, that he might escape these insults. This his purpose was known to Vukashin, who feared lest perchance the tsar, with the help of the people of Ragusa, might come back and punish him and imprison or slay him. So when he heard that the tsar had fled he sent after him his guard to take him again. Which thing they did, and killed him on the second day of December, 1367. Some say the murder was done by Vukashin himself, others say the soldiers did it. The blessed Patriarch of Pech, holding to the written tradition of his patriarchate, tells us that Vukashin himself did indeed slay Tsar Urosh, but not while he was fleeing to Ragusa, but when they

were on a hunt, to which Vukashin took him for pastime, in his heart hoping to find then a good time and place to be alone with him and carry out that purpose of his, so terrible to the Lord. So when he found time and place and opportunity, at once he fell upon him and raised his sinful arm, with his heavy wrought arms in his hand, and the long-suffering wearer of the crown fell prostrate and dead to the earth near Narodimye on the field of Kossovo, on the twenty-ninth day of April and the twelfth year of his reign. So ended the son of the great tsar, and such was the death which befell him. In this kind Vukashin repaid his debt to the tsar, son of evil and brother of Satan that he was. And this was the end of the glorious Nemanya dynasty which had ruled the Serbian State for two hundred and twenty years. Our crowned rulers came to an end in this way, because Tsar Urosh had no child.

His body was brought and buried in the church of the Falling Asleep of the Mother of God, near the town Petrich. After some time this blessed sufferer began to show forth his holiness by the miracles which were done at his tomb. Wherefore the faithful took his uncorrupt remains, from which came healing, and guarded them till the coming of the Turks, at which time they brought them to Sirmie and placed them in the monastery Iazak, which is in Frushka Gora, where they rest in peace until this day. Through his prayers may the Lord, who glorified this His saint, have mercy upon us. Amen.

THE LIFE OF THE SAINT AND MOST BLESSED  
MARTYR, TSAR LAZAR, RULER OF THE  
SERBIAN LAND (1372-1389)

THIS saint and ever blessed Prince Lazar was the son of Lazar Pribatz Grebelyanovich, a man of great renown and high rank, who lived at the court during the reign of the Tsar Stephen Dushan. Since his father, owing to his high position, was engaged on manifold affairs of state in the court of the most glorious Tsar Stephen Dushan, there is no doubt that his son Lazar, called by Providence to build up once more the Serbian kingdom, lived at the court of that tsar also in his youth, and received that training which would befit his station.

From his youth Lazar was gentle, wise and brave, and of a high spirit, and all these gifts of the Lord the martyr Lazar kept throughout his troubled life. Adorned with such good qualities the young Lazar soon held a high position of honour. Not only did the tsar look upon him, but he entrusted to him some service for the state. Furthermore, he was called to be son-in-law of the tsar, taking to wife Militza, daughter of the great prince Vratko, of the Nemanya dynasty by the side of Vukan, son of the first Stephen Nemanya. Thus Lazar received the title of prince. After the unlooked for death of Tsar Dushan, the foundations of the Serbian state were weakened because of the greed for power among the Serbian nobles, who demanded each one



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all for himself. And when the throne of the good and gentle Tsar Urosh was shaken by the plots of the crafty Vukashin, all the Serbian land fell into discord and bloodshed and lay under the yoke of Vukashin, the tsar murderer. Throughout this time St. Lazar grieved in secret, and, abiding by the counsel of wise men, waited for better times. He watched all that happened but he did not desire to do anything for the furtherance of the plan he had conceived, whereby those lands which of old time had been part of Dushan's empire might be made one Serbian state. But when, by the judgment of God, the tsar murderer Vukashin received his reward, after his death St. Lazar arose to carry out his plan. He conquered many lands, especially Herzegovina, Rascia, Serbia and the Banat, holding that he had a right to the throne through his wife Militza, tsarevina.

Now when St. Lazar had become ruler in this way, there came to him a godly old man, the priest-monk Isaiah, from the Holy Mountain, and spoke with him concerning the anathema by which, in the time of Tsar Dushan, the Patriarch of Constantinople had excommunicated all the Serbian people;<sup>1</sup> and he showed to him how they might be reconciled. This proposal was pleasing to the tsar and he straightway took counsel with the Serbian patriarch, at that time Sava II; then they sent the aged Isaiah to Constantinople to pray the patriarch of that day, Theophanes, to remove the anathema from all Serbians, both dead and living. Isaiah received all that he would need, and taking with him two of his disciples from the Holy Mountain and

<sup>1</sup> This anathema was pronounced in 1346 by the patriarch because Tsar Dushan had proclaimed himself Tsar of all Bulgarians and Greeks, and had at the same time appointed the Serbian archbishop, Joannicius, patriarch.

an interpreter, went to the place as they had arranged. When the Patriarch Theophanes learnt the cause of the coming of I saiah, he took counsel first with the emperor John Palæologus and with the whole synod, and then he removed the anathema from the tsar Stephen Dushan and Joannicius II, the first Serbian patriarch, and all who had died unto his time, and thus was renewed the spiritual union within the Church of Christ. Only one condition he made—that the Serbian people should wage war no more upon the Greeks and the countries round about. As a token of the sincerity of his peace and spiritual pardon, the patriarch Theophanes granted on his own behalf and in the name of all the synod that the archbishop of the Serbian people should bear the title of patriarch, but should have no jurisdiction over other countries.

When this had been accomplished in Constantinople, the patriarch and his whole synod wrote letters containing the decision of the council, and sent them by a special embassy to Prizren, the capital of the Serbian tsardom. These were read in church after the Holy Liturgy, thus announcing to all the removal of the anathema from the dead and the living. At this time the second Serbian patriarch, Sava, died, and by order of 'Tsar Lazar the synod was assembled at Pech, the seat of the patriarchate. There they elected the godly Ephrem, and he was placed in accordance with the canons on the patriarch's throne. As a token of his new dignity, he placed the crown of the tsars on the head of Lazar, at the end of his first Holy Liturgy. Thus he conferred upon him the authority of tsar, in the year 1376, in the presence of the embassy from Constantinople, which returned afterwards to its own land.

When Tsar Lazar had once more united the Church

and brought peace to his people, he began to do good works : he gave alms to the poor and the sick ; he made imperial presents to the church of the Lord ; and he built new and splendid churches. Thus, he gave to the hospital of Khilindar many villages for its support and enlarged its church with a new narthex ; and in his fatherland he built a great and splendid church by the name of the Ascension of Our Lord, with cells like palaces. This church was called Ravanitza and was in the diocese of Branichevo.

But we must not fail to tell how that, after Tsar Urosh was killed and the kingdom of the tsar murderer Vukashin brought to an end—for he was vanquished by the Turks and slain by his servant—the Turkish power ever growing more and more in Europe, the Serbian state was forced to pay tribute to the Turks at times during the reign of Tsar Lazar. And though this man who built again the Serbian Empire would have liked to be rid of the burden which put the Serbian people and empire to shame, it was not possible to resist the great power of the Turks. So when Sultan Murat with his army took the town of Nish and made ready to conquer Serbia also, St. Lazar made a treaty, promising to give him yearly tribute and to send him a thousand Serbian men-at-arms. This came to pass in the year 1386. But Murat, like a wild beast seeking for prey, when he had gone back a little from the Serbian border, conquered the lands of their neighbours. Thus he became a danger to the peace of Serbia, for by these conquests he made himself her powerful neighbour. Such a captain of savage hordes, ready to carve his way to victory with fire and sword and ruthless violence, it was not easy to satisfy with tribute and presents, because for the slightest cause and at the least resistance his greedy soul, craving all that was not its own,

was filled with rage. But in the year 1387 Lazar vanquished Murat and his army on the river Sitnitsa ; the army was destroyed and Murat only saved himself by flight. He thereupon raised a great army against Lazar and his state in the year 1389 that he might avenge this defeat. The messenger bearing tidings of the misfortune which thus threatened the Serbians, came to a state rent by discord, envy, treachery and pride between the nobles and the leaders of the people. Those who were on the side of Tsar Lazar were few in number and dispirited ; nor were they all of one mind. It is but just to say that a great number of the nobles and voievodes summoned by St. Lazar came to Kossovo field with their armed men. But some came too late and some came not at all. And because of this delay and the absence of Serbian leaders, the army of St. Lazar was small. To this must be added the treachery of Vulk Brankovich, the son-in-law of Lazar, the old disunion among the leaders, and the going forth in an ill moment of his second son-in-law Milosh Obilich. For this man was falsely slandered by Vulk to Lazar ; and, in order to prove his faithfulness, he left the Serbian army just before the battle and came to the camp of the Turks. There he made his way to the powerful Sultan Murat and like lightning took his sword and thrust it through the body of the Sultan. From this wound the Sultan died soon after ; but the Turks, enraged because of it, fell upon Lazar and his army. The battle was long and bloody, and if all those who had been summoned had come to it, and Vulk Brankovich with his horsemen had been faithful to his emperor and countrymen, the Turks would have been defeated. But though the Serbians fought bravely for Cross and freedom and were led by their tsar who gave his own life as a sacrifice, after long fighting they

began to weaken. They had no other forces to support them, and, moreover, they saw their tsar fall from his horse. He mounted another: but his army supposing him to be fallen dead, began to save themselves by flight; nor did they hear the words of their leader who, from his fresh horse, cried to them to return. So, when misfortune came from all sides, the Turks were victors; and the tsar, with many of his nobles, was made prisoner. Being brought before Murat, he and all that were with him were beheaded and attained a blessed release. This defeat of the Serbian Empire came to pass in the year 1389, on the fifteenth day of June.

After the battle, when the Turks had left the field, the body of the blessed Lazar was brought to Prishtina and there buried in the church. Two years after the Tsarina Militza and her son, despot George, moved his remains to Ravanitza, a monastery he had built. From there, when the Turks came to Serbia, they were moved to the monastery of Ravanitza in Sirmie, where they lie in peace and without corruption to this day. The memory of this blessed martyr is kept alive by the Orthodox Serbians every year on the fifteenth day of June—the day of the battle and of his death.

Through his prayers grant, O Lord, that we may come to Thy Kingdom. Amen.

## THE LIFE OF THE HOLY FATHER EPHREM, PATRIARCH OF THE SERBIANS

OUR holy father Ephrem was born of a priest's family during the reign of King Milutin. While he was yet young, there came to him the desire for the monk's way of life and the spiritual exercises. This was little pleasing to his parents; for they thought only of the growth of his body and hoped that through him they would have many grandchildren. But Almighty God, to Whom all desires are known, turned aside the purpose of the parents of Ephrem and their thoughts which were fixed only upon the things of the body, by means of a dream which came to the young man Ephrem. By this his fears were taken from him and a way was opened to him which fulfilled his purpose and led him to his goal. He set out for the place told to him in his dream, and found there an old hermit, Basil by name, with whom he abode, following the order of the spiritual exercises, fasting and praying. Thus he entered upon the path of spiritual growth and took upon him "the angel way of life."<sup>1</sup> When his parents heard where he was, they determined to take him away by force and marry him. But that Providence, through whom all good things do come, brought Ephrem to Athos, where he lay hid far from their evil designs, passing his time with God and worshipping Him in spirit and in truth.

<sup>1</sup> *Velika skimna*, the most strict and ascetic rule in the monastic life.



It came to pass at this time, however, that the Turks invaded the Holy Mountain and pillaged it. Ephrem departed with some of his disciples and came to live in the monastery Ibrovsky, where he became higumen. But it was not his destiny to remain there, and he left all and came to the great Serbian church (Pech), where he bowed down before the holy relics of the saints of the Lord buried in that place, kissing them and receiving the blessing of the Patriarch Joannicius. From there he passed to the monastery of Dechany, near which he chose for himself a desert place and there lived as a hermit, serving God with prayer and fast.

Now it chanced that Tsar Dushan died at this time. Straightway lawlessness broke forth and all order was gone. Through all the country there was turmoil and civil war, so that our hermit hardly escaped alive from the robbers who demanded of him the treasure which they believed he kept hidden. When the Patriarch Sava heard tell of this, he called Ephrem to him and took him and made ready for him a cell in a cave in a narrow valley ; there he left the holy man, but came at times to hold converse with him.

Not many days after, the Patriarch Sava died. Tsar Lazar, who was now on the throne, looked upon the excommunication of his Church with displeasure, and because he was an honourable son of the great Church and desired to establish peace among his faithful flock in the Serbian land, he sent the old monk Isaiah from Athos and the priest Nikodim to the Patriarch Theophanes at Constantinople, to pray him to remove the anathema and unite the two Churches with his pardon. And thus it was brought to pass. When it was needful to make a new Serbian patriarch the old Ephrem was elected by the synod. For a long time he said them nay, but at last he yielded and took upon him the position. It was

one which called for new strength. But he was so old that he was forced to resign not long after ; and Spiridon was raised up in his place. Meanwhile the godly saint, Ephrem, retired to the Church of the Archangel Michael, in the monastery of St. Stephen. After that came troublous times ; the saint and martyr Tsar Lazar was slain on Kossovo field, and the Patriarch Spiridon died. Once again the godly old Ephrem left his desert and was prayed to take the helm until a new patriarch should be elected. At last, by the help of the Lord, Stephen, son of St. Lazar and despot of Serbia, called together the synod. It chose Daniel, and then the godly man returned and came to his cave. There he lived for a short while : and then there came the hour of the passing of his soul. Sava, who had succeeded Daniel, was a witness when the godly man gave up his spirit to the Lord in the eighty-eighth year of his life, on the fifteenth day of June. His body was buried in a tomb in the great church.

Through the prayers of Thy saint, O Lord, shield our souls and bodies from evil, keep us from disunion in Church and in State, and make our lives to accord with Thy commandments in the Gospels. Amen.

## THE LIFE OF THE SAINTLY AND JUST STEPHEN, SERBIAN DESPOT

AFTER the days of the Serbian Tsar, Lazar Grebelyanovich, who received a martyr's death on the field of Kossovo (on the fifteenth day of June in the year 1389), his first-born son, Stephen Lazarovich, began to rule in Serbia, not with the title autocrat, but called despot.<sup>1</sup> He is known among his people by the name Stephen the Tall, and he ruled over Rascia and the countries round about for thirty-eight years. To his own peaceful heart he took the sorrows of his people, and he endured with patience the misery which had fallen upon the state. His title was Despot Stephen, by the grace of God, Lord of all Serbia and the coastlands and the lands along the Danube. The monument of this godly soul remains unto this day in the monastery Rasava, which we call Manasia. He lived for such a space as pleased the Lord, and died on the ninth day of July in the year 1427. And because he was without child and his two brothers, Vulk and Lazar, had been beheaded by order of the Sultan Musa in Philipopolis in the year 1405, he caused George Brankovich to succeed him in the despot's position. He was the second son of Vulk Brankovich, who was son-in-law of Tsar Lazar, having for wife his daughter Mara, so that George was the son of this Mara. When he had received the power

<sup>1</sup> The title despot merely = prince, and has none of the evil associations we have given to it.

from the aforesaid Stephen, he chose for his capital Smederevo, and to comfort those Serbians who lived under the Turkish yoke, he had himself declared despot, receiving authority from his father-in-law, John Palæologus, whose daughter Irene he had married. But when he saw that his position as despot would be beset by many dangers, he made ready for himself in good time a refuge in Hungary, receiving it from the Hungarians to whom he ceded Belgrade. While he was there, in Hungary, setting his affairs in order, came Murat with his army and captured Smederevo. He took prisoner the despot's son Grgur, and imprisoned him with his brother Stephen, first in Adrianople, and afterwards in Cappadocia. There he put out their eyes: but their father heard not of this cruel deed.

At this time the despot George, with his wife Irene and his youngest son, Lazar, wandered through the Hungarian country and the coastlands without fatherland, without money, and without a place to rest his head, because he was everywhere pursued by the enmity of the Turks. At last he came back to Hungary, and when it came about that Sultan Murat desired peace with the Hungarians, he called George to him that he might go between them, promising that he would give him back the Serbian despotdom and his sons. The peace was concluded and George received his reward and his two sons. But when he saw that the light of their eyes was gone he wept with sorrow and scarce could stand.

When the Hungarians broke the treaty and their plighted word, they were smitten near Varna; but George remained in his own land. From this time forward George and the Serbian lands were often in difficulties because of Hunyadi, the leader of the Hungarians, or because of the Turks. To secure him-

self on the one side the despot George made a treaty with Hunyadi : but by this means he enraged Mahmoud, who had taken Constantinople and now came with his army and conquered the Serbian lands and forced the despot to set forth on his wanderings again with his children. After this second exile from his fatherland in the ninetieth year of his age, he sought aid from the Hungarians, with whose help he thought to take again his country. But this he did not bring to pass : so he came back to his fatherland and went to live near the Danube instead of returning to Smederevo. Not long after he was taken prisoner by Michael Silatidy, chief of the Hungarians, but he was ransomed and went to Smederevo, where he died on the twenty-fourth day of December in the year 1487. All his possessions he left to his wife Irene and his sons Grgur, Stephen, and Lazar. Now Irene desired her first-born, Grgur, to receive the throne of the despot, although he was blind. But Lazar the youngest was opposed to this because of his blindness ; and he drove him out and killed his mother with poison. But Stephen, the middle brother of the three, though blind, he took to himself, The exiled Grgur came to the Sultan Mahmoud II to seek help, but when he received it not he went to the Holy Mountain and was made monk by the name German, and there he died.

Now when the people heard that Lazar had slain his mother by poison, they were so enraged against this matricide that all hearts were turned from him and they refused him obedience. And after this came Sultan Mahmoud with his army, and Lazar, when he perceived the greatness of the forces against him, either from fear or because his conscience was troubled by the killing of his mother, fell sick and gave up his sinful soul in the year 1458.

Now we begin the history of the holy and just Stephen. From his youth he was very gentle and God-fearing, obedient to his parents in all things, courteous to his brothers, and to all others meek and peace-loving. He was wise and instructed in the Holy Scriptures while he was yet young. On this foundation his training was made secure and his soul was enlightened by the light of eternal truth; and he kept his heart pure with the teaching of the Gospel commandments of virtue. Now when George, his father, was treating with Sultan Murat, that he might save the Serbian state from the Turks, and made proposals of peace, Murat demanded, as a condition of that peace, that he should give him his daughter Mara for wife. The unhappy father gave up his daughter, for he chose rather to deliver his people from evil than to save himself from the sorrow of a parent's heart. Knowing the gentleness of his son Stephen, his father sent him to be a guard for his sister and to comfort her in her sadness in that strange land. And he, ever obedient as son and as brother, went to Adrianople, the Sultan's capital, in the year 1435, and there lived some long time. But the Sultan, in his lust for the conquest of foreign lands, and blind to that justice which is pleasing to the Lord, advanced against his wife's father and took Smederevo and the fortress and Grgur also, the first-born son of George, whom he carried away captive. Owing to this calamity both brothers found themselves in the hands of the Sultan, who kept them close in Adrianople. And when men told the Sultan that his prisoners were plotting against him with their father, he sent them to Cappadocia, and soon after, to prevent any further designs with their father against himself, he ordered that they should be made blind. Thus our godly Stephen, free from all evil and for no fault of his, received this terrible punishment. Yet his faith in the

Lord and His good Providence never failed, but he bore his misfortune with a strong heart, comforted by his clear conscience. After some time when peace was made between the Hungarians and Sultan Murat through the labours of despot George, Stephen returned with his brother to his fatherland. After the death of his father and the driving out of his elder brother Grgur through the act of his younger brother Lazar, and when his mother had been poisoned by that same son and this Lazar was himself dead, Stephen heard that the Turks, ever increasing in power, had burned the splendid monastery of Mileshevo. Moreover he perceived that they were making ready to destroy all the noble monuments of the godly Serbian kings and tsars; wherefore he determined for righteousness and his people's sake, to appear before his subjects as Serbian despot. This he did with the help of some of the nobles in the year 1461. But this was not pleasing to many of the people, who chose rather to be obedient to the Turks than to their own despot. Therefore they were angry because he did this, and they showed their hatred not only by dethroning him but by sending him bound as a prisoner far from his fatherland, into Dalmatia. After some time he was delivered from his bonds and imprisonment and all the troubles that had come upon him, and he went back to his fatherland. He hoped that his people would atone for their former insults by well doing; but his return was in vain, for he saw again the malice of his subjects. Smederevo was taken once more by the Turks, and Stephen went away, taking with him nothing but his title of despot. When he heard tell that some of his people had designs against his life, he hid himself now in one place, now in another, and at last found safe refuge with the Prince of Albania, the brave George Scanderbeg. Here he married, taking for wife the daughter of this



prince, Angelina, a maid gifted with every virtue, known among our people by the name Maika Angelia (Mother Angelina). She bore to him two sons, George, who was afterwards Archbishop Maxim, and John, who in his time was despot.

Some time after the Turks invaded the country of Albania, bringing fear and trembling to men's hearts, as they ever did. And because Stephen knew that the Turks pursued after him that they might utterly destroy the dynasty of Brankovich, he made ready in haste to go, and passed over to the country of Italy, where he lived some years with his wife and children. Then he fell ill of the sickness that often had troubled him, and his last hour came and he gave his soul to the Lord, dying in the fifty-sixth year of his life in the year 1468. His body was buried in this foreign land and remained there till the year 1486, when his sons, together with their mother Angelina, moved his remains, glorified with incorruption, to Sirmie. There they placed them in the church of the Holy Evangelist Luke, in the town of Kupinovo, near the river Sava, and they healed many people who were in evil plight. In the name of Jesus Christ Our Lord, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for evermore. Amen.

## THE LIFE OF SAINT JOANNICIUS OF DEVICH <sup>1</sup>

THIS saint, the godly father and hermit, Joannicius, was born in Diocletia, on the coast of the Adriatic. We know not the names of his parents, but doubtless they were of the Orthodox Faith and of the Serbian people. When Joannicius was young he loved the Lord and desert places, wherefore he left his fatherland and came to the river Ibar, to a desolate place called Black River. There with great severity he followed the rule of prayer. Some of the monks then heard of him and went to him in the desert, and were received by him. They remained there to be instructed of him, and they came to know the holiness and the godly life of St. Joannicius. Then were they obedient to the saint, as to a spiritual father and leader, with their whole heart. After a while the godly Joannicius called upon his brothers to build a church and a monastery ; which thing they did with the help of God and of Our Lord Jesus Christ. When the rumour spread abroad concerning the holy life of the godly Joannicius, many of the people came that they might follow the spiritual life with him. But some of those who came praised very greatly the holiness of the life of the godly Joannicius and his care for the monastery, so that godly man and servant of Jesus, Joannicius, was ill pleased. Therefore he punished his spiritual

<sup>1</sup> The exact date of this saint is not known, but the mention of the despot George Brankovich shows that he belongs to this period.

children and, commending them to the grace of the Lord, left his monastery and went to live in the desert of Devich, where was solitude and a spring of water, and began once more his former spiritual exercises. We see again the words of the Gospel in practice: "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid, and a candle is not to be covered." When the great despot George heard of him in Smederevo, he came to him with his men and besought him to pray to the Lord that his daughter might be made whole, who long time had been sick. And because the Lord looked upon his servant and upon the prayer of the godly Joannicius, George, giving thanks and praise to the Lord, built a church in honour of the Coming of the All Holy Mother of God to the Temple. He adorned it with great splendour and by royal letters gave to it many villages for its support. The godly Joannicius set the monastery in order and calling the brothers round him, took thought for their good life, giving his own life as their example. In the fullness of time he came to a great old age and went to the Lord. His body was buried in the church of the monastery three cubits deep in the ground. Through his relics the Lord of His mercy healed many who came with faith. Whom we also venerate and beseech that through the prayers of His saint He will have mercy upon us and grant us His Kingdom in the world of His saints. Amen.

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## THE LIFE OF THE HOLY FATHER MAXIM, ARCHBISHOP AND SERBIAN DESPOT

THIS blessed and glorious Maxim was the first-born son of the despot Stephen the blind and Angelina ; the blind Stephen was the middle son of George Brankovich of Smederevo, and Angelina was the daughter of Prince Scanderbeg. In Holy Baptism Maxim was called George, and his younger brother was John. Both of them were born in a foreign land because their father was persecuted by his own people, and was obliged in these straits to save his life by coming to the Prince of Albania, whose daughter he married. It is not known for how long a time the saint and his brother John lived in a foreign land, but afterwards they came with their mother to Sirmie. And because they were the children of the Serbian despot, they looked to receive some land for their support. But the Serbians of Sirmie had a despot already in the person of Vulk Brankovich, a kinsman of Stephen the blind, so that this hope of the unhappy sons of Stephen was vain, and they lacked all but their title. It is said that they went to live in Kupinovo on the river Sava, and there waited lest haply their fortune should change. When Vulk died, George, afterward called Maxim, thought to take the power of despot because he was the first-born : but already, in the reign of Vulk, the despot was straitened in power and land, so that George received no more—for at this time the Hungarians ruled in Sirmie. Thus to be despot was

only to have the title and a little support for life, and George was made monk by the higumen of the monastery Monasia of Stephen the Tall. He was called Maxim, and he gave the title of despot to his brother John, who is known among our people as the last Serbian despot.

Maxim lived as a monk in Kupinitza, fasting and praying. At this time the Hungarians were in Sirmie, and there was no bishop and but few priests. Then the monk Maxim, zealous for the Orthodox Faith, called to Sirmie the metropolitan of Sofia, Levit: and he came and ordained Maxim to be priest in Kupinitza, and afterwards made many other priests also. But because the Turks oftentimes invaded Sirmie to plunder it, the monk-priest Maxim, with his brother the despot John, went a short way further into the mountains and established themselves in Berkasovo, where John died. And when the Turks came from Bosnia and threatened death to the people of Slavonia and Sirmie, Maxim, seeing their peril, went by the river Danube to Wallachia, and took with him the bodies of his father and brother. He came then to the lands of Rodul, the voievode of that district, who received him gladly. Not long after the metropolitan of Wallachia died, and Rodul, after taking counsel with his people, raised up Maxim to the empty throne, honouring in him the despot's dynasty. It came to pass after this that the voievode of Moldavia, Bogdan, made ready for war against the voievode Rodul. But Archbishop Maxim took on himself the labour of uniting them again, and changed bloodshed into peace, and brought back the two voievodes to love and concord. Then this Bogdan, who had made peace, gave to the archbishop a staff wrought of silver.

After the death of Rodul, Mina came to the throne, an evil man who loved the Turks better than the Chris-

tians. When blessed Maxim saw that he could not remain a friend with Mina, and that Mina was against him because he was a Serbian and of the despot's dynasty and archbishop in Wallachia, he was afraid—not indeed that he would lose his diocese, but that he would lose his life. Therefore he waited only for a fit time to escape. Now Maxim, by the advice of his nobles, desired to make peace with the Hungarian king, and looked about him to see who could be sent to do this work aright. When he heard that, through the intercession of blessed Maxim, Rodul had made peace with that king, he sent Maxim to make peace with the Hungarian king. Maxim rejoiced greatly because of this opportunity, and when he had brought to a good end the mission with which he had been charged at Buda Peste, he returned not to Wallachia, but sent the king's letters and established himself with his kinsman Yakshich in Sirmie. And here he chose out the place called Krushedol, and laid the foundations of the monastery of that name. But Mina had now left the Orthodox Faith and become a Mohammedan. And the people of Krayova with their nobles set up the young man Nagul, of Bessarabia, to be voievode over them, with this one counsel, that he should call back Maxim to take once more his former dignity. Nagul consented and recalled the holy man. Now the nobles, knowing that Maxim had a cousin, a girl, Militza by name, worthy to be the wife of their young voievode prayed the archbishop to bring her with him. When he heard these things the blessed Maxim came in haste, that he might not leave the throne empty, and gladly brought the girl with him. She married the voievode Nagul, and Maxim ascended the archbishop's throne. And because he desired to mark his new dignity, he built two monasteries in this country, and so, by these buildings, repaid the people for making him archbishop.

But he longed with all his heart and soul to pass the last days of his life in the monastery of Krushedol. And the voievode gave him leave and rich alms also, that he might make an end of the building which was only begun. So he consecrated a new metropolitan for the people of Wallachia, returned safely to his fatherland, finished what was not yet done in his monastery, strengthened the brothers in virtue, purified his soul with penitence, and went to eternal life on the eighteenth day of January in the year 1560.<sup>1</sup> His body, glorified by the miracle of incorruption, was placed with that of his brother John and their father Stephen, and buried in the church of the Annunciation in front of the altar. In the name of Jesus Christ Our Lord, to Whom be glory as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> This date can hardly be correct in view of the dates given for the death of his father (p. 84) and younger brother (p. 95).



## THE LIFE OF OUR MOTHER, SAINT ANGELINA, DESPOTITZA OF THE SERBIANS

THIS holy saint, Angelina, was the daughter of the godly Orthodox Prince of Albania, the brave Scanderbeg. At this time Albania was called Scanderia, and the people were Christians, and the most part Orthodox, for till those days they were not subject to the Turkish power, and their fatherland was made glorious by their victories in battle for the faith. At the court of the prince who ruled this people the maid Angelina grew up, increasing in the gifts of the Spirit by the help of the Lord God, and her will made strong by the teaching of Christ. The name of her mother is not known, but we can see how she was brought up and how great care her parents gave to the training of her soul in the spirit of the Gospel teaching—and who but her mother would have given so much thought to the growth towards God of her heart and soul? We can see here the finger of the Lord God in His forethought, electing and setting apart Angelina to be the lifelong companion of Stephen,<sup>1</sup> the Serbian despot, who was an exile through no fault of his own, a victim of evil, and, through the hatred of the divided Serbian people, was forced to seek a sure refuge where he might. So the will of the Lord was done, and God kept the fugitives safe; indeed, Prince Scanderbeg received the Serbian despot, Stephen, when he

<sup>1</sup> *Vide supra* the Life of St. Stephen, Serbian despot.

came to him, like a friend, a kinsman, a brother. He was neither proud, nor did he blame him. And because his exile with this prince was long, so that he became as an inmate of the house, by the help of the Lord it was not strange that these two hearts came very close together, and for their perfect union there was only needed the blessing of the Church. So, when the parents, despite his blindness, gave their consent to this marriage between their daughter and Stephen, and when Angelina agreed to share the lot of the young despot, who was not only without country but also without eyes, there followed the rites of the blessing of the Church.

Some time after there were born from this marriage two sons, George and John. It was when these had come to man's estate and had been trained in the godly virtues and all things needful, that the misfortunes of their father began again—those misfortunes which were not to end with the father. The Turks invaded this land of faithful Christians, showing no mercy to age or sex. Wherefore Stephen, with his wife Angelina and his two sons, fled to Italy, where he lived till the day of his death. From which town he set out for Italy—Alessio or Durazzo—is not known, nor is it known to which he went when he came there. Moreover we cannot tell the place where he lived, the day of his death, or where his tomb was. It must suffice us to know for our peace of mind that the godly Angelina, now a widow, was a Serbian despotitza and very poor. She prayed the Hungarian ruler to help her, that the lot of her sons might be made more easy, and he showed mercy to them in their poverty and gave them the town of Kupinovo in Sirmie. So she came from Italy with the uncorrupt body of her husband, which she placed in Kupinovo. When Almighty God had established her where she might use her gifts, He set her sons also in high posi-

tions where they could be of service. The first-born, George, gave his title of despot to his younger brother John and was made monk, receiving the name Maxim. Afterwards he was called to be archbishop, and built the monastery Krushedol. The younger brother John was married, but he had no children ; and after a short time he died, and his pure soul went to the Lord. With him ended the Serbian despots on the left bank of the river Sava.

Both these sons died during the life of their mother. Stricken in years, and having drunk the cup of sorrow to the dregs, she took upon her "the angel way of life," and followed the rule of prayer as a nun for the salvation of her soul. When her time came she died quietly in the Lord, and was buried in one tomb with her sons in the church of the monastery of Krushedol, in Frushka Gora, where to this day there is a service every year in her memory.

In the name of Jesus Christ Our Lord, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be all power and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

## THE LIFE OF SAINT JOHN, DESPOT

THIS holy man and servant of God was the son of Stephen and Angelina. This Stephen was the middle son of the despot, George Brankovich of Smederevo. The misery which fell upon the house of his parents, led John, who was gentle of heart, to follow the life of prayer while he was yet young. Because he was inspired by the great doctrines of the Orthodox Faith he bore all things patiently. He never doubted the faith of his fathers, though some sought to lead him away, nor was he troubled in heart by the constant changes from place to place in strange lands. At last he came with his mother and brother to Kupinovo, in Sirmie, where was the despot Vulk Brankovich, and there he lived some while. When the despot Vulk died the Bulgarians, who ruled the country as far as the river Sava, were not willing that Serbian despots should continue any longer in Sirmie. None the less the title of despot remained in the person of George, the elder brother of John. But when George, who was not married, desired the life of a monk rather than the life in the world, and was made monk with the name of Maxim, the title of despot fell to his younger brother John; and because Sirmie was Serbian country he had some authority that he might rule the soldiers who were given as cavalry to help Vladislav, the Hungarian king.

John, despot, married Helen, daughter of Stephen Yakshich, a kinsman of Dimitri Yakshich, who was the

son-in-law of despot Lazar, son of George Brankovich. This wife bore John only one daughter, Maria, who married Ferdinand Frankopan, Count of Croatia, and from this marriage were born Stephan Frankopan and Katherine. Stephen became Zhupan of Modruzia, and Katherine married Nicholas Zrinski, Ban<sup>1</sup> of Croatia.

At this time the Turks made many invasions into Sirmie, so that despot John moved to Berkasovo, a little way from the border. There he lived a life pleasing to God, and died on the tenth day of December in the year 1503. With him ended the dynasty of Serbian despots, for he was the last of his line. His life was full of good works, though it has been handed down that he had few possessions himself. But all that he did proceeded from the goodness of his heart, and the Lord looked upon his good will and manifold deeds, so that His grace appeared upon his relics and made them healing. When Archbishop Maxim died the relics of their father were brought to Krushedol in Sirmie, and there, with the bodies of Maxim and John, they were placed in the church in front of the altar.

Through his prayers, O Lord most merciful, make our way straight, that we may live worthily and render a good account to Thee in the day of the Last Judgment. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Ban = governor.

## THE LIFE OF THE HOLY AND JUST STEPHEN SHILANOVICH.

THIS holy and just Stephen was born of Orthodox and godly parents in the district called in our day Pashtrovich, in Hum, near to the sea, during the reign of the great Doge of Venice. While he was still young he loved the Lord greatly and purposed to direct the way of his soul towards Him. When he came to man's estate he was zealous to fulfil in his life the will of the Lord, which he learnt from the Holy Scriptures. He was very skilled in all military knowledge, wise and brave. He placed himself under the Serbian despot of those days, whom he served faithfully, in accordance with the words of the Apostle, "Servants, be obedient to your masters according to the flesh, for that is pleasing unto the Lord"; and again, "That servant who doeth the will of the Lord is called to be the steward of all things." By serving his earthly lord, he served his heavenly Master; by warring against the Turks, he became a soldier of the army of heaven; indeed, he was a terror to his enemies, but more terrible still to the powers of evil, and as he was victor over the Turks, so also he thrust down all wicked thoughts and rooted up temptation from his God-loving conscience, having the fear of the Lord always before his soul, like the prophets. By the fear of the Lord all evil is dispersed, and the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and this saving fear was to him as an army on which he trusted

more than on his sword and his other weapons of war. So trusty a servant the despot desired to reward, and he gave to him a part of the Serbian country, the most fertile in all Sirmie. To this place he came and chose for his home a place of humble standing, but no longer humble when the saint lived in it, for then it seemed more glorious than the cities of the tsars—a house like the house of Job. For Job, say the Holy Scriptures, “was perfect and upright and eschewed evil.” So also we may say of Stephen, for he was a man perfect and thinking only what was upright. His thoughts were righteous not only before God but before men. He was pure and free from guile, always doing good works, giving alms, living uprightly, with prayer, firm in the Orthodox Faith and in love unfeigned for his neighbours. When he exercised authority he was clothed in justice; pride never visited his mind and heart, but he ruled always in the fear of the Lord.

Now a terrible famine fell upon his land, not because it was not fertile, or because of floods or droughts, but because of the invasions of the thrice-accursed Turks, that godless people. For the war continued many years, and they pillaged all the country side, taking all the oxen and cattle, so that the people could not plough the fields. At such a time the godly living Stephen, sorrowing for his people in such a plight from the famine, opened all his granaries and gave to all men the grain without payment. Thus he saved them without receiving one mite in return; for he was mindful how Dives called to Abraham when he was in the fire of hell, and the five virgins against whom the door was shut, and that Just Judge who will say, “I was an hungered and ye gave Me no meat,” and he looked only for the reward of the Lord in everlasting life.

When this year of famine was past and still he could



not bring the war to an end, or stem the tide of invasion and pillage, the saintly and just Stephen could no longer bear to look upon the cruelties of the Turks in the Serbian country, all deserted and plundered. So he left his home and went to the Hungarian king, not because he was in fear but because his one faithful people could not fight single-handed against an enemy whose power was ever increasing and whose oppression was beyond measure. The Hungarian king received him gladly because of his bravery, or perchance for his wisdom and virtue, and gave into his keeping more villages and towns on the left bank of the Drava than he had before. He established himself in one of the towns which the king had given to him, and continued to live as in former days, abounding in firm faith and works of love towards his neighbour. So lived he many years till at last he exchanged this transitory for the eternal life, and his soul departed to that place he had so greatly longed for from his youth up. His honoured body was buried by his wife Helen with all the rites of the Church in a place of great beauty a little way from the town. She gave also a great part of his possessions to his servants, letting them go where they would, while she herself, in fear of Turkish attacks, departed to Germany.

Not long after the Turks invaded that country where St. Stephen had lived and died ; and they took that town and remained there in great multitudes. While the Turkish army was ruling this country as though it was their own, one night, when all the land lay in silence, there appeared by the providence of the Lord shining rays of light on the place where the body of St. Stephen was buried. When they saw this sign, the Turks came to that spot in fear and began to dig, looking to find some treasure. But soon they saw that their hopes were

vain, for they found only in the tomb the body, lying uncorrupt in its death clothes, from which issued a sweet smell. Greatly amazed at that which they had seen and found, and knowing not what to do, or the race and name of the dead, they called some of the faithful who stood by. But these made answer that they knew nothing. The soldiers then told their emir concerning these things, and he came to the tomb in wonder and asked them who had been buried there. Then some who knew this thing made answer, "None other than a voievode who lived in this town, Serbian born and Stephen by name." When the emir learnt this, he perceived that Stephen was akin to him; for he also had been born at the same place as Stephen, and had been made prisoner and sinfully denied the Orthodox Faith; but now, full of love for his kinsman, he acted honourably towards his relics and gave order that they should be kept with all respect. When the report went abroad through all lands, that they had found the relics of the saint, and that some miracles had been wrought through them by the providence of God, there came honourable monks under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and besought the emir for the holy relics. The emir, after gifts received, gave them the sarcophagus containing the relics of this upright man. The monks, like the man who bought the pearl of great price, took those honoured remains with joy and went quickly to their monastery in Frushka Gora, to the church of the Nativity of the Mother of God, called by its founder Shishatovatz, which is in Sirmie, where before the saint had lived. When the monks came to the monastery, they took from the cart the sarcophagus with its relics, and singing psalms and hymns, they laid them in a place set apart in the church, where they rest till this day for the faithful to kiss them.

Now his wife Helen heard tell that men had found the body of the just and saintly man and brought it to the monastery Shishatovatz. And she had great longing to see with her eyes that which she had been told, for all that she was so far away in German country. But the rulers of that land set themselves against her desire and counselled her that she should not go again into that country taken by the Turks. Yet when she made known to them how greatly she yearned to go, recking little of the peril from the Turks and what might befall her, they gave way to her desire but forbade her to take away her possessions. When Helen found herself in this perplexity she gave away a great part of her possessions in secret to the poor and the widows and the prisoners, leaving for herself only so much as she could carry with her, and privily took ship down the Danube and so came to the monastery Shishatovatz in safety. Thus she came to the body of her husband; and weeping she kissed him on the brow and said, "Blessed art thou, Stephen; my good will be with thee. Do thou remember me who would speak with thee in time past of holy things, that I too may receive some portion of that which thou hast in the Lord."

No long time after she laid aside her lay clothes and a lock was shorn from her head, and for the name Helen she received that of Nun Elizabeth. Then she went into a desert place three days' journey from the monastery on the far side of Frushka Gora, by the river Danube. All that she brought with her from the German land, together with the book of St. Stephen, wherein were written the Psalms of David and some of the canons, very finely bound together, she gave to the monastery. And when she had lived three years in prayer and fasting, she died and was brought to the monastery and there buried in the narthex on the left hand. The body

of St. Stephen lies in the middle of the church, where the singers are, and every day it is exposed to the faithful, but especially on the day of his memorial, when many of the Orthodox come here.

Through his prayers may Jesus Christ Our Lord give us strength for repentance and forgive us our sins. Amen.

## THE LIFE OF SAINT BASIL<sup>1</sup>

TRADITION has it that this new hierarch, of the same name as the great Basil of Cappadocia, was born in Herzegovina in the village of Popovo, of godly parents whose names are not known. He grew up in the house of his parents and suffered grievous things from the evil Turks who ruled that country by force of arms and persecuted the Church of God for our sins. This saint, taught by his parents, grew in the Spirit of the Lord. From his youth he loved the Church of God, increased in virtue and lived the life of the pure and life-giving Spirit. When he came to man's estate this blessed young man gave no thought to the vanities of this sinful world, but chose to go to the house of the Lord rather than to walk in the counsel of the ungodly. Wherefore he left the house of his parents and came to the monastery of Trebinza, where is the church of the Falling Asleep of the All Holy Mother of God; there he was made monk and followed "the angel way of life." But alas! for our sins this monastery was destroyed by the thrice accursed Turks. Ah! we must needs weep for our holy places where dwelt the monks like angels, following the holy Orthodox life of the Spirit, but now sacrilegiously overthrown by the evil Turks. These destroyed the havens of our ancient love of God and multiplied our tears, for we lay at the mercy of our enemies. Oh! Thou Son and Word of the Lord, unite

<sup>1</sup> The date of this life is uncertain. He was a Montenegrin saint,

us all into one, as we were of old time, that we may confess Thy grace and praise Thy most Holy Name, through the prayers of Thy Holy Mother.

The All Merciful God, seeing the good-will of Basil's heart and his pure life adorned with virtue, did not purpose to hide this candle under a bushel but to set it in a high place to give light to all, and to give him the high office of bishop, when he had passed through all the needful steps. So the saint became shepherd of the faithful in Zahumlia and Scanderia. In this high calling of the Lord the blessed Basil multiplied his zeal for the benefit of the Orthodox Church. Who can tell his praises and prayers, his deep sighings of the heart, his petitions offered up with tears? The saint longed to shepherd this flock entrusted to him after God's own way, and to lead them unchecked along the road of salvation. And the Lord furthered his teaching with manifold miracles, so that all marvelled at this glory of the saints, Basil the newly manifest, who comforted his children in sorrow and perplexity.

Now we must make known to all, far and near, who speak evil of our Holy Orthodox Church, pure Bride of Christ, how that the Lord visited us in His saints, so that they must shut their mouths who speak so many things and so often. These our foes must know that to-day the Church bears saints of God and is adorned with glorious martyrs under the hard and grievous yoke of the Turks, even as it was in old time during the cruelty of the persecutions under the Roman Empire. Let us call to mind the martyr of Beret in Albania, who suffered fearful martyrdom for the faith from the cruel Turks. These have persecuted the Christians on all sides, multiplied the number of the martyrs, through whom the faith in the hearts of the orthodox was strengthened, as it was through the relics of

holy Basil, owing to their miracles. But behold the sinful lust and terrible envy of those who are of the Pope's heresy: hating the truth they blaspheme holiness and defile their tongues with evil words proceeding from their hearts, hateful to the Lord: yea, they slander the saints of the Lord, who are the life of the Holy Ghost. Oh, the devilish blindness which destroyed the Church! Why received they the pieces of silver like Judas and betrayed the Bride of Christ, persecuting the holy Church with the enemies of Christ. These Papists, who cut themselves off from the holy Church and, despite the miracles, would not perceive the signs of Heaven, may the Lord give them hearts desirous of truth, so that they may return with love to their mother the Orthodox Church, which is of the East! We await their conversion, desiring for them that they leave the darkness of the Western heresies and cease from attacking with the vile and poisonous bite of the serpent the faithful children of the Lord, destroying the womb of their mother. After confession of the true dogmas let them come to us and take their place in the Church of our God, with heart and soul confessing the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity, in that form in which it has been written by the God-fearing Fathers in the Nicene-Constantinople Creed, which speaks so firmly against their heterodoxy. If they so came to us they would rejoice the hearts of their teachers of the West, Augustine, Jerome, Gregory and many others who taught and believed as we believe to-day by the grace of God.

But to return to our history of St. Basil. This newly manifest worker of miracles was long-suffering with all who troubled him, gentle and patient, forgiving those who did evil to him, merciful to the poor and the stranger, brave in the defence of his flock against the wolf. By journeys to the Holy Mountain he rejoiced



his heart and enriched it with the wisdom of the monks, like the old saints of the Serbian country, Sava and Simeon: and the Lord did not desert his flock, but gave them back their holy shepherd, and gave rest to his body in the land of his labours, so that after his death also his body, still uncorrupt, healed the sick and guarded the Orthodoxy which he served so gloriously during his life.

St. Basil lies in peace at Ostrog, where he is made glorious of the Lord by many wonders and the healing of all who come to the tomb and his relics with faith and love. As in his life he was merciful to the weak and ill in body or spirit, so after his death is he merciful and helps not only the faithful but also the sinful-hearted Mussulmans who come to him seeking aid and the healing of their sick and those who are possessed.

Through the prayers of the newly manifest Basil, may the Lord, Who glorified His saint, give power and might to all of us, that we may walk in his footsteps, keeping the commandments of the Lord and preserving the Orthodox Faith undefiled, that we may die in uprightness, delivered from our sins, saved from the everlasting pains and granted the heavenly reward. Amen.



## GLOSSARY

*Angel way of life*—the most ascetic of the rules for the monastic life in the East.

*Archimandrite*—a dignitary of the Orthodox monastic orders; below a bishop.

*Autocrat*—a ruler of an independent state who has no overlord.

*Ban*—a military governor, acting as representative of the king.

*Banat*—the territory ruled by a ban.

*Dachila*—the title of the governors appointed by the Turks to rule conquered provinces.

*Despot*—lord, the title of the last Serbian rulers. It does not exclude the existence of an overlord.

*Despotitza*—the title of a widow of a despot.

*Ecclesiarch*—an official in an Orthodox monastery mainly responsible for the services.

*Eikon*—a sacred picture of Our Lord or a saint.

*Higumen*—the head of a monastery.

*Holy Mountain*—always refers to Mount Athos and its monasteries.

*Lavra*—a monastery founded by a king.

*Provoenchani*—first crowned.

*Voievode*—a petty chieftain, baron.

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